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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE:
A STUDY OF THE THREE ORIGINAL ROSICRUCIAN TEXTS

BY

STANLEY W. BEELER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN

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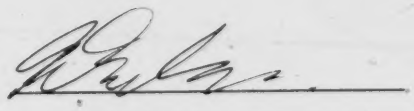

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my father, Bruce L. Beeler who followed the example provided in Luke 15. 11-32.

Abstract

This dissertation deals with the literary phenomena surrounding the publication and subsequent reception of the three original Rosicrucian texts. It presents the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit as paradigmatic examples of literary texts which, although they are no longer widely read in their original form, have been used as a focal point for literary allusion and "religious" discussion since their publication in the early part of the seventeenth century in Germany. It is proposed that the effect of these three works is founded upon their indeterminate nature which promotes the possibility of multiple reception. To make this possibility of multiple interpretation more explicit the texts are discussed as "fantastic literature," science fiction, literal interpretation and religious allegory. Comparisons are made between the phenomenon surrounding the Rosicrucian texts and other literary series that have had a lasting effect that transcends the reception of the original publications. Some examples used are the works of Conan Doyle, and J.R.R. Tolkien. The dissertation concludes with a sample of texts, both literary and non-literary, published between the seventeenth century and today including analysis of their debt to the original three Rosicrucian texts.

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Introduction

The appearance of several texts in Germany during the early part of the seventeenth century, known collectively as the Rosencreutzer Schriften, has been of interest to scholars for various reasons. Although originally published in German and Latin, they appeared almost immediately in the other major languages of western Europe. There has been much discussion as to whether they should be seen as religious manifestoes, mystic-alchemical writings, or as political and utopian satire. In this dissertation I want to look at these texts in the light of modern literary interpretation in order to understand the literary mechanism which has resulted in the multiplicity of interpretations of these texts. To this end I shall begin with a short introduction to the three original Rosicrucian texts, as well as with a general look at the major trends in critical thought that have been applied to these texts.

Some scholars, like Richard Kienast, consider the actual number of "Rosencreutzer Schriften" to be four because the Fama Fraternitatis, the first of the works concerning the career of the mythical Christian Rosencreutz was bound with a German translation of T. Boccalini's Ragguali di Parnasso when it first appeared in 1614. I have excluded

this text from my discussion because it does not deal with the Rosicrucian society or the life and times of Christian Rosencreutz. Even the remaining three original Rosicrucian texts are by no means consistent in their theme or literary form. The first, which is entitled Fama Fraternitatis (1614), deals with the journey made by one C.R. to the Middle East during the fifteenth century. It details his creation of a secret society dedicated to the improvement of the lot of mankind using the alchemical knowledge that he brought back from his wanderings. The second text, the Confessio Fraternitatis (1615), seems to be primarily concerned with the affirmation of the essentially Protestant character of the society, which was, at this point, still a literary fiction. The third work of the series, the Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz (1616), is the only one of the three texts with an acknowledged author: the Lutheran theologian and utopian writer Johann Valentine Andreae. It is also the first of the group which displays characteristics of the usual literary work of art. The character of C.R. becomes Christian Rozencreutz and we are presented with a first person narrative of his experiences at an allegorical wedding ceremony.

Johann Valentin Andreae was born in the town of Herrenberg in southern Germany in 1586. His grandfather was the famous Lutheran theologian Jakob Andreae, who was once rec-

tor of the renowned University of Tübingen, which was later to become Johann Andreae's alma mater. His father was also a theologian. Considering this background, it is not surprising that Johann Andreae took up a career in the church and became famous in his own right as a theologian. Richard van Dülmen says of Andreae: "so gilt Andreae doch einhellig als Vorläufer, zumindest als entscheidener Wegbereiter von Pietismus und Aufklärung."[1] However, the path to this seemingly preordained goal was not a smooth one. His talents as a writer, which became apparent at a relatively early age, were to be a mixed blessing in this time of religious turmoil and fanatical persecution. We must remember that the Thirty Years War was not only remarkable for its conflicts between the Catholic and Protestant factions, but also for its horrible persecution of those suspected of unorthodox beliefs within each of the major confessions. Andreae was dogged his whole life by suspicions which ranged from simple professional jealousy to accusations of authorship of heretical writings.

Soon after the publication of these three texts Germany was inundated with numerous writings which were related to the Rosicrucian society. These included works by Adam Haselmeier and Michael Maier (1568-1622), as well as many

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[1]Richard van Dülmen, Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978, p.11.

anonymous texts and letters. Many writers sought to establish contact with the organization of alchemists mentioned in the texts, while others expressed disapproval or disbelief. A third group discounted the notion of an actual Rosicrucian brotherhood but accepted the texts as a call to a mystic philosophy.[2] Some of these texts were published anonymously while others were presented to the public under pseudonyms.

Although the initial flood of publications in Germany diminished around 1620, France in 1623 came under the sway of Rosicrucian rumors. In that year Gabriel Naudé published Instruction à la France sur la vérité de l'histoire des Frères de la Rose-Croix, which added to the already existing furor. Thomas Vaughan, twin brother of the metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan, published English translations of the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis in 1653. The effect of the Rosicrucian publications moved inexorably throughout Europe and had lasting effects in popular culture as well as founding a literary tradition that has lasted

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[2]For detailed studies of the initial effect of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit see Richard van Dülmen, Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978; Frances A. Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972; or Will-Erich Peuckert, Das Rosenkreutz, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1973.

until today. The last chapter of this dissertation will provide a sampling of this body of literature which includes works by Percy Bysshe Shelley, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Montfaucon de Villars, and Albert Steffen. This list, although not comprehensive, gives some idea of the extent of the influence that the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit have had in the last three centuries.

At this point in our introductory statements about the work at hand it would seem appropriate to give a short summary of the three original Rosicrucian texts.

Fama Fraternitatis

The Fama Fraternitatis Oder Brüderschafft des Hochlöblichen Ordens des R.C. An die Häupter, Stände und Gelehrten Europae (1614) begins by identifying the narrator of the text as the brothers of the Christian brotherhood of R.C. The brothers speak of the wonders of the time in which half of the world as well as many marvels of nature have been revealed to mankind. They tell of the founder of the society, Brother C.R., who was born in Germany and traveled to the Holy Land. In the lands of the Arabs brother C.R. took up the study of Arabic and translated the book M. into

Latin as well as applying himself to mathematics and physics. He then went to Fez where he became a beneficiary of the yearly exchange of scientific and magical knowledge between the Arabs and Africans. Through his studies C.R. became convinced that the arts of the Arabs were contaminated by their false religious beliefs. Nonetheless, he learned a great deal and resolved to return to Europe and spread the benefits of his work among his fellow Christians.

In all the countries of Europe his attempts at education were met with derision by the intellectual establishment. Although the world was ripe with the birth of new knowledge and great men such as Paracelsus, brother C.R. was unable to bring the benefits of his alchemical education to his homeland. Therefore, he returned to Germany and built a house containing a memorial to his journey and his discoveries. After five years he thought again of his desire to initiate a reform based upon his discoveries and so he founded the R.C. fraternity. The fraternity used a magic language and script and resolved to keep themselves secret. They vowed to:

1) Cure the sick for free.
2) Adopt the dress of the land in which they live.
3) Meet every year on day C.
4) Look for a successor.

5) Adopt the word R.C. as their symbol.

6) Remain secret for one hundred years.[3]

The first of the original brothers to die was I.O. in England. He was famous for having cured the young Earl of Norfolgt [Norfolk]. All of the tombs of the brothers were to remain hidden.

The story is then told of the discovery of brother C.R.'s tomb by accident. It is a wondrous creation in which are preserved machines, texts (including one by Paracelsus) and the uncorrupted body of brother C.R. On the tomb is a Latin inscription which is a summary of brother C.R.'s story.

Confessio Fraternitatis

The Confessio Fraternitatis (1615) is mentioned in the

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[3](1)keiner solle sich keiner andern profession außthun, dann krancken zu cururen und diß alles umbsonst (2)keiner soll genötigt, von der Brüderschafft wegen ein gewiß Kleid zu tragen, sondern sich der Landes art gebrauchen (3)ein jeder Bruder soll alle Jhar sich auff C. Tag bey S. Spiritus einstellen oder seines aussenbleibens ursach schicken (4)ein jeder Bruder sol sich umb ein tügliche Person umbsehen, die ihm auf den fall möchte succdiren (5)daß Wort R.C. sol ihr Siegel, Losung und Character sein (6)der Brüderschafft sol ein hundert Jahr verschwiegen bleiben.
Fama Fraternitatis, p.22.

Fama Fraternitatis as the text in which the brothers will make known the thirty seven reasons for the revelation of the society many years after its inception. However, the Confessio Fraternitatis that we have has no such list, although there have been valiant attempts by interpreters to find them hidden in the text.

The Fama Fraternitatis trails off towards the end into a protestation of faith and a criticism of creation of gold for non-philosophical reasons.

The Confessio Fraternitatis Oder Bekanntnuß der löblichen Bruderschafft deß hochgeehrten Rosen Creutzes an die Gelehrten Europae Geschreiben, which was published in 1615 in German along with a reprint of the Fama Fraternitatis and some commentary by Adam Haselmeyer, begins with a protestation of the veracity of the R.C. Brotherhood.[4] The narrator then states that the R.C. Brotherhood does not pose any threat to orthodox religion [Protestant] or worldly government. This document is intended to expound further upon the principles of the R.C. Brotherhood for the benefit of the learned.

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[4]The Confessio Fraternitatis also appeared in a Latin edition earlier the same year bound with the Fama Fraternitatis. Fama Fraternitatis R.C. Das ist Gerücht der Brüderschafft des Hochlöblichen Ordens R.C. An alle Gelehrte und Heupter Europae Benebern deroselben Lateinischen Confession, Welche vorhin in Druck noch nie ausgegangen. Cassel: Wilhelm Wessel, 1615.

The brothers state that they have now resolved to share their knowledge and riches with others and will no longer restrict the membership in the fraternity. They claim that although the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis are openly published[5] the general public will not have the acumen to understand the message and of those who apply for membership to the R.C. Brotherhood only the deserving will be allowed to share their secrets. They declare that C.R. was born in 1378 and lived for one hundred and six years.

The R.C. brothers state that not all who seem to lead the modern Reformation of the world are members of their society. In fact, they claim that God has written the message of the new world in both the book of nature and the Bible and all who have the skill may read it there.

In conclusion, the narrator warns that the audience must put away books by false alchemists and beware of their cheating ways. Those who are motivated by greed will not find the brothers of the Rosy Cross.

Chymische Hochzeit

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[5]Although it is claimed that the Fama Fraternitatis was published in five vernacular languages simultaneously there is no external evidence to support this. Nevertheless, the three texts did spread rapidly throughout Europe.

The Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz, Anno 1459 was first published in 1616 and is immediately remarkable because of the first person narrative style adopted by Andreae. It no longer has the textual flavor of a manifesto or non-literary text but has the form and structure of what could be called--in later times--a novel. The narrator begins by recounting his visitation by an angel-like figure bearing an invitation to a royal wedding. After some meditation and a dream with allegorical features he sets out to attend the ceremony.

Day two of his adventure (the first day of actual travel) begins with the choice of the route of his journey aided by the appearance of a dove and a raven. When the narrator finally arrives at a portal he identifies himself as a brother of the Red Rosy Cross[6] and is admitted to a series of gates and questions. After being tonsured by invisible barbers, the narrator goes to an assembly where he meets friends who address him as Rosencreutz. A meal is served and many of the guests attempt to impress the others with their "occult" powers. After the meal Rosencreutz and some of the others are bound and he spends the night in another allegorical dream.

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[6]Rohten Rosen Creutz

On the third day there is a weighing ceremony to physically determine the moral worth of the guests. Rosencreutz passes with flying colors. The charlatans of the previous day are given especially severe treatment. All those who pass the test are awarded the order of the Golden Fleece and Lion and given a page to provide conversation and guidance. Rosencreutz is treated to a tour of the wondrous place and is told a series of riddles by virgins. During the night Rosencreutz dreams of a door that he can not open.

On the fourth day Rosencreutz oversleeps his breakfast but joins the others in time to be presented to several kings and queens. Before this happens he reads the inscription on a monument which alludes to Hermes as a Christ figure.[7] There follows an interlude in which Rosencreutz is shown many marvels with apparent alchemical import. The assembled guests are treated to a play involving the struggles of a Moor. The day ends with the kings and queens beheaded and their (six) coffins sent across a lake at night.

On the fifth day Rosencreutz rises early and is taken by his page into the king's treasury and shown the naked

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[7]For a thorough description and deciphering of the complex mathematical and linguistic puzzles in the Chymische Hochzeit see volume two of John W. Montgomery, Cross and Crucible, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973.

body of Venus. He is rewarded for his curiosity with a prick on the hand from Cupid. The rest of the guests arrive and the entire assemblage is transported across the lake to a tower.

On the sixth day the assembled guests begin the work of restoring the king and queen to life. This is accomplished by performing certain rituals and moving upwards in the tower, floor by floor. Images of the king and queen are created and souls enter the newly formed bodies.

The seventh day begins with the guests who took part in the re-creation of the king and queen being declared Knights of the Golden Stone. They return to the other shore of the lake and Rosencreutz has a discussion with the king concerning the porter who greeted him when he first arrived at the castle. Our narrator is told that the porter was once a famous astrologer who was doomed to remain a gatekeeper because he had seen Venus in her bed. Rosencreutz fears to admit that he deserves to take the man's place by reason of a similar crime but finally manages to confess. The story ends with a surprising literary device. Two quarto leaves of the text are declared missing and the author is supposed to have returned home instead of serving his sentence.

Problems of Contemporary Reception

When the Fama Fraternitatis appeared in Kassel, Germany, in 1614 one of the initial problems that the contemporary audience faced when attempting to place this work in a context of expectations or to find the appropriate codes to apply was the fact that it was bound with a text entitled Allgemeine General Reformation der ganzen weiten Welt. This is not an original piece but a translation of a section of the satire Ragguali di Parnaso by Trajano Boccalani. Van Dülmen says of this translation: "versteht sich als eine Satire auf alle äußeren Weltverbesserungspläne."[8] In van Dülmen's opinion this satire is basically different from the Fama Fraternitatis except

> ...was auch wohl den Grund zur gemeinsamen Veröffentlichung abgab: beide verurteilten alle äußeren Verbesserungspläne, wie sie Alchemisten und falsche Propheten verfochten.[9]

He believes that the Generalreformation presents the ways which cannot succeed and the Fama Fraternitatis presents a sketch of the single possible way of reformation.

Hans Schick also believes that the publication of the Generalreformation along with the Fama Fraternitatis has some significance other than the publisher's convenience:

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[8]Richard van Dülmen, Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft: Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978, p.85.

[9]Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft p. 86.

> Es mag Paradox scheinen, zwei Schriften zusammen in die Welt zu schicken, von denen die eine die Generalreformation als Utopie dem Fluch der Lächerlichkeit überantwortet, die andere diese Generalreformation, allerdings in einem tieferen idealen Sinn, verwirklichen will. Aber soll dieses Paradoxon[!] nicht das wesentlich Neuartige und Einmalige des Planes bewußt unterstreichen und den neunmal Klugen alle Einsprüche von vornherein wiederlegen?[10]

The general scholarly consensus is that the combination of the enigmatic Fama Fraternitatis with the obviously satirical Generalreformation was intended to provide a sort of extra-textual indication on how the audience should receive the Fama Fraternitatis. The contrast between the Generalreformation's open parody of explicit attempts to reform the world is a foil which deepens the significance of the secret society that is proposed in the Fama Fraternitatis. In the Fama Fraternitatis we are told by a collective narrative voice ("Wihr die Brüder der Fraternitet des R.C. . . .")[11] that C.R. (Christian Rosencreutz) had traveled to the East and gained wondrous knowledge. Upon his return to the West he is unable to convince the savants of

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[10]Hans Schick, Das ältere Rosenkreuzertum: ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Freimaureri, Berlin: Nordland, 1942, p. 57.

[11]Johann V.Andreae, Fama Fraternitatis in Joh. Valentin Andreae--Fama Fraternitatis--Confessio Fraternitatis--Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz. Anno 1459., ed. R. van Dülmen, Stuttgart: Calwer, 1981, p.17.

Europe to accept his discoveries: " . . .aber es war ihnen alle lächerlich und weil es noch new, besorgten sie, ihr grosser Nahme würde geschmälert . . ."[12] Because of this rejection Rosencreutz returns to Germany and slowly forms a secret brotherhood around him which is dedicated to the practice of the knowledge gained in the East in a less open manner.

This is in effect the confirmation of the contrast suggested by van Dülmen and Schick on the intra-textual level. The publication of a book which mocks the radical approach to the reformation of the world is parallel to the scorn that Rosencreutz meets in his efforts to impart his wisdom openly. The suggestion of the Fama Fraternitatis that the world should be improved by an invisible (that is not openly revealed) college of wise men is therefore reinforced.

However, this does not preclude the acceptance of the Fama Fraternitatis as a work of literature. The seventeenth century was a period in which all writing was considered to require a moral lesson. Even picaresque novels like Grimmelshausen's Simplicissimus abound with moralizing. For this reason we cannot accept that the horizon of expectations of the audience upon reading the Fama Frater-

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[12] Fama Fraternitatis p.19.

nitatis would immediately suggest that this is a work of religious intent rather than "pure" fiction. Considering the extra-textual fact of its publication with the General-reformation might lead the audience to interpret the moral lesson of the Fama Fraternitatis in one way, but it would not seem reasonable to accept it as a factual account of an actual society. In this case we see that both intra- and extra-textual considerations have come into play to suggest that the Fama Fraternitatis was indeed a work of literature and not an actual account of a mystic society. From the perspective of the modern student of literature it would seem that the evidence so far precludes a deliberate hoax.

As mentioned previously the Rosicrucian works were published anonymously. Much of the discussion concerning the Fama Fraternitatis is based upon the question of who actually wrote it. In the centuries since its publication opinion has swung from one extreme to another. Some believe that Andreae was the sole author of all of the Rosicrucian works, others believe that he was assisted by a committee of occultists at the University of Tübingen or was not a part of the publication of the first two works at all. Then there is the naive interpretation that the Rosicrucian works are factual accounts of a society that has existed since the fifteenth century. Of course the question of who actually

wrote these works will have a great deal of influence upon how we place them as far as genre and mode are concerned. Unfortunately, there seems to be no absolute method of determining beyond all doubt the author of the Rosicrucian texts. However, if we proceed upon the assumption that Andreae was indeed the author of the Fama Fraternitatis the preceding argument is even more convincing.

Andreae says in his autobiography that he was born in 1586. This means that the first draft of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz must have been completed while its author was still a teenager. Andreae was a member of a family that was firmly positioned in the hierarchy of the Lutheran church. His grandfather, Jakob Andreae, was instrumental in codifying the dogma of the church and was for a time rector of the famous theological University at Tübingen. Johann Valentin Andreae himself graduated from the university of Tübingen and served for a time as a court theologian at Würtemberg. Thus (we may see that) the somewhat radical and mystic tone of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz may have been an embarrassment to him in the later years of his life.[13] Although Andreae was

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[13]For a detailed investigation of the theological implications of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz see Montgomery.

a studious person and involved not only in his own specialty of theology but also in mathematics and science, his record at the University of Tübingen was not totally unblemished.

Andreae attempted to make light of his involvement in the creation of the Rosicrucian texts. He called the Chymische Hochzeit a "Posse," in his autobiography. Roland Edighoffer believes that this term "Posse" which in the original Latin reads ludibrium, is more significant than a simple farce.

> . . . in diesem Sinne bezeichnet Andreae . . . die Chymische Hochzeit als ludibrium, d.h. als scherzende Maskierung eines tiefsinnigen Geheimnisses".[14]

Although this short, rather embarrassed sounding note in Andreae's autobiography seems enough to indicate to the reader that the work is literary rather than some sort of esoteric manual for chemical procedures, there is another matter that further complicates the network of codes which must be disentangled in order to position the Chymische Hochzeit. Andreae was a professional theologian at a time when the Lutheran church was going through a period of self examination. As mentioned earlier, suspicion of unorthodox behavior or beliefs was severely punished. When Andreae finally wrote his memoirs he was an old man and many believe

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[14]Roland Edighoffer, "Johann Valentin Andreae: vom Rosenkreuz zu Pantopie" in Daphnis, 10(81), p.228.

that he wrote in order to distance himself from a movement that had given him cause for embarrassment later in life.

> Der ganze Ton des Absatzes klingt nach sich-Entziehen und Reinwaschen; es seien Jugendtorheiten, unbedeutsame Werke, Possen, von denen er einige überdies vergessen und verloren habe.[15]

Peuckert dismisses this and goes on to associate the hero of the Chymische Hochzeit with Andreae himself. Because of the similarity of the Andreae family crest to certain indications in the text, he believes that Andreae actually had written a sort of semi-autobiographical text in which he revealed his true desires.

> Wer ist der weiße Magier Andreaes?
> Die Deutung ist seit langem bekannt: es ist Andreae, der Dichter, selber. Er zeichnet ihn mit seinem Wappen . . . Die Chymische Hochzeit ist eine Dichtung, welche die Sehnsucht des Dichters enthüllt.[16]

This brings the possibility of another means of interpretation; the text understood as a sort of allegorical autobiography. There is an incident in the text which would lead one to lend some credence to this interpretation when seen in the light of the author's biography. The hero of the tale, Christian Rosencreutz, during one of the evenings after the rituals of the day had been completed, accompanies

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[15]Das Rosencreutz, p.49.

[16]Will-Erich Peuckert, Pansophie: ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weißen und schwartzen Magie, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1957, p.340.

a servant to a tomb.

> Da sahe ich Fraw Venerem gantz bloß (dann die Decken hatte er auch auffgehebt) in solcher zierd und schöne daliegen, daß ich schier erstarret . . .[17]

If we again turn to Andreae's autobiography, he mentions an incident in which he was expelled for a time from the university at Tübingen because of association with some others who had congress with prostitutes.

> Ein gewisser Heusser, aus Oesterreich, Sigism. Rhat und einige andere, die mit den Buhlschwestern jener Zeit allzuoft und ausgelassen Muthwillen trieben, verwikelten auch Unschuldige in ihre Ausschweifungen. Diese schändliche Aufführung theilte sich auch mir mit, wurde aber bald entdekt, und zog mir Strafe und Schande zu.[18]

This incident may be the one represented in the Chymische Hochzeit by the episode mentioned in the preceding quotation in which the protagonist is led into an act of venery by another. However, there is no clear evidence that this interpretation may be taken as the final one. Edighoffer believes that he has unearthed evidence which indicates that Andreae was expelled from University not for his sexual indiscretions but rather because of a political pamphlet.

> Das kursierende Libell war in Wirklichkeit ein Pamphlet gegen des fürstlichen Rats Matthäus Enzlin, die der Untersuchung, sowie strenge

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[17] Chymische Hochzeit, p. 98.

[18] Selbstbiographie p. 23.

Strafen angeordenet hatte.[19]

Kienast claims that Andreae was punished by a strongly monarchist rector of the university (Enslin) because of fear of the rise of a powerful middle class. Andreae's family was important yet not noble and therefore subject to this paranoia.[20]

This bit of extra-textual evidence would lend credence to the view that the Chymische Hochzeit is some sort of Christian Utopian pamphlet. That this interpretation is not incompatible with acceptance of the text as a work of literature is amply attested to in J.W. Montgomery's thorough study of Andreae.[21]

In the time in which the texts were first published the German language was just beginning to assert itself again as a medium in which an educated man might convey serious thoughts. Latin was still the language of choice in the university and the list of Andreae's other publications indicate that he was quite able to express himself in the "learned" tongue of his fellow churchmen. Nevertheless Andreae was an advocate of the cause of German as a literary language. He was a member in good standing of the

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[19]Edighoffer, p. 222.

[20]Kienast, p.33-4

[21]J. W. Montgomery, Cross and Crucible, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973

famous Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft. One of the goals of this organization was to further the cause of German as a literary language. Although Andreae was dedicated to the furtherance of his native language as a literary tongue he was not so free of the traditions of the past as to abstain totally from the use of Latin terms and phrases within the text of the Fama Fraternitatis. The Confessio Fraternitatis was originally published in Latin and only later appeared in German. The use of Latin within the German text of the Fama Fraternitatis is a key to the contemporary audience. It indicates that the author had a certain level of education and therefore his social position was more or less determined. Thus, the audience has certain keys to the way in which they may interpret the text at hand. It is in German and therefore not simply a religious text intended only for the doctors of the university. Throughout the book there are passages in Latin and in fact the Fama Fraternitatis includes a summary of the entire story in the Latin inscription on Christian Rosencreutz's tomb.[22] This Latin inscription actually helps to give the work an air of verisimilitude. In the fifteenth century, the time when Christian Rosencreutz was supposed to have died, it is unlikely that any educated man would have an inscription in

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[22]Famma Fraternitatis, p.27.

German on his tomb.

It is difficult to say whether we should consider the choice of language as an extra-textual or intra-textual element in the audience's reception of the work. The use of German as a primary language decorated with Latin terms and passages provides a framework for the reader's understanding of not only the author's social position but also the way in which the work itself may be interpreted. If we assume that Andreae was the author, then the choice of German has the added importance of being an example of an early interest in the use of German as a literary language. The author's selection of linguistic medium also demonstrates the broad range of audience that he wished to reach. In other words, it suggests literature rather than theological speculation.

Another element which is a part of the total impact the work must have had upon its contemporary audience is the sustained use of the exotic and marvelous. These elements, which are to be found within the text itself, are an indication of the way in which the author intended it to be received.

That the Fama Fraternitatis is a marvelous tale of travel is beyond doubt.[23] Christian Rosencreutz does indeed

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[23]This approach to the Fama Fraternitatis as an example of travel literature will be dealt with in greater detail in our chapter on theoretical approaches.

gain all of the knowledge that he brings with him home to Europe from the sages of the East. The audience is given a rather hazy description of his travels in the Middle East which, as Todorov indicates, lends credence to the marvels described there simply because the audience would have no real knowledge of what did or did not exist in the region.[24] The internal structure of the Fama Fraternitatis's story, which follows the pattern of a traveler's tale, provided ambiguous signals for the framework in which the audience should develop its interpretation. Traveler's tales have a tradition of acceptance as reality.

A prime example of this acceptance by hearsay of the exotic characteristics of the East is to be found in the noted English poet and occult philosopher Thomas Vaughan's The Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, in which he says of the Rosicrucians:

> It is true indeed that their knowledge was not purchased by their own inquisitions, for they received it from the Arabians, amongst whom it remained as the monument and legacy of the children of the East. Nor is this at all

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24"...le récepteur implicite de ces contes [merveillux exotique] est censé ne pas connaître les régions où se déroulent les événements; par conséquent il n'a pas de raisons de les mettre en doute. Todorov, Introduction à la littérature fantastique, Paris: Seuil, 1970, p.60.

> improbable, for the eastern countries have always been famous for magical and secret societies.[25]

An interesting parallel to this case is the example of the famous medieval work, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. His audience assumed that the material presented in this reworking of common myths and actual experiences of travels in the East was the gospel truth.

> At about the same time [late fifteenth century] . . . Columbus was perusing Mandevill for information on China preparatory to his voyage; and in 1576 a copy of the Travels was with Frobisher as he lay off Baffin Bay."[26]

What to the modern mind is obviously fictional was to the contemporary audiences of both Mandeville and Andreae entirely plausible because they misunderstood the intentions of the author. Entertainment and utopian conceptions were presented in a text that was so "closed" (in Eco's sense of the word) that it was seized upon by an audience eager to hear of the marvels of far off places and accept fiction as truth. In this way the keys to interpretation within the text are so directed towards one particular sort of audience

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[25]Thomas Vaughan, "The Fraternity of the Rosy Cross and A short Declaration of their Physical Work," in The Works of Thomas Vaughan ed. A.E.Waite, New York: University Books, 1968, pp.348.

[26]C.W.R.D. Mosely, in his introduction to The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983, p.9. It is interesting to note that Marco Polo's factual report of his travels was rejected as obvious fiction by its initial audience.

that they actually encourage the misinterpretation of the Fama Fraternitatis which caused Andreae so much embarrassment.

The audience addressed by Andreae had a great desire to believe in the wonders of alchemical magic. From Andreae's subsequent writings on the topic and his general deportment in life it is unlikely that he actually believed in the powers of alchemy. However, this was an enormous drawing card for his audience. They desperately wanted to believe that there was a secret college of adepts who could perform the transformation of base metals into gold. Europe in the early part of the seventeenth century abounded with charlatans who claimed to be able to do just that in order to make a profit from their gullible audience. Andreae's disgust for this practice is attested to strongly in the Latin play Turbo (1616)[27] which centers around the misfortunes of a student who is drawn into just this sort of deception. It is unlikely that Andreae seriously would espouse alchemy in one work while disparaging it in another published at roughly the same time. It is obvious that if we accept Andreae as the author, the Fama Fraternitatis suffered from the misinterpretation of the codes that were present in both

[27]Johann Valentin Andreae, Turbo. In Theatrum productum. Helicone, juxta Parnassum, Strasbourg: ? 1616.

the work itself and in the external indications of the other works of the author. This is, however, a sign for the placement of the work which is available only to the modern interpreter. When the work appeared in the early part of the seventeenth century, the audience could not know the general opinions of its author. In fact, as the bulk of this dissertation will indicate, the modern reader is presented with a text that is indeterminate in message and structure.

No matter what the author's intentions were concerning the Fama Fraternitatis it was enough of a "closed" work that it immediately suffered misinterpretation. As Will-Erich Peuckert says:

> Und nun mit einem Male fühlen sich Hunderte, Tausende vielleicht angesprochen. Nun gehen in allen Teilen Deutschlands, "Sendbriefe" um. Sie sind an keine bestimmte Person gerichtet; sie wollen allein durch ihr Vorhandensein bezeugen, daß ihre anonymen Schreiber sich der Fraternität R.C. anbieten.[28]

There was a flood of letters from all quarters asking for admission into this society, which we may assume existed only in the mind of its author.

> .in spite of its obscure symbolism, the Fama Fraternitatis was received by intellectuals with something of the excitement that might mark the publication of a revolutionary political manifesto today. It was read not only in Germany, but also in other European countries; in three years it ran into nine different editions, as well as several

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[28]Das Rosenkreutz, p.110.

translations into Latin and Dutch.[29]

An interesting example of the kind of response that the intellectual community of Europe gave to the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis comes in 1652 from Thomas Vaughan. In his introduction to an English translation of the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio he states:

> As for the Fraternity whose history and confession I have here adventured to publish, I have for my own part no relation to them, neither do I desire their acquaintance. I know they are masters of great mysteries The acknowledgment I give them was first procured by their books, for I found them true philosophers and therefore not chimeras -- as most think -- but men. . . As for their existence -- if I may speak like a schoolman -- there is great reason we should believe it, neither do I see how we can deny it, unless we grant that Nature is studied -- and books also written and published -- by some creatures other than men.[30]

Vaughan goes into great detail about the alchemical practices of this society in which he believes, but with which he has no contact. It would seem that the reception of the works was, on the whole, rather naive. As we have seen from the co-publication with an obviously fictional work like the Generalreformation the extra-textual indications are that the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio should have been interpreted as works of fiction. The numerous replies

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[29]N. MacKenzie, ed., Secret Societies, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967, p.139.

[30]Vaughan, pp.347-8.

and commentaries of occultists like Vaughn added another extra-textual element that led to further misplacement of these works. The audience could not help but suspect that the stories spoke of an actual society when it seemed that there was so much interest aroused among other writers.

A final intra-textual element which would lead away from the interpretation of either the Fama Fraternitatis or the Confessio as a serious alchemical manifesto is the lack of internal allegorical description. True alchemical texts are filled with cryptic descriptions of strange events which when correctly interpreted are found to be procedures for laboratory experiments. It is precisely this element which makes an understanding of Andreae's most famous work Die Chymische Hochzeit Christani Rosencreutz more difficult.

> The title of the book indicates that its symbolism is that of alchemy; the text suggests that this alchemy is not the transmutation of base metals into gold, but the regeneration of the soul. Nevertheless some scholars regard the book as a purely imaginative work of earlier date, having little to do with the Rosicrucians. Others see it as a destructive satire designed to exaggerate, and thus to discredit Rosicrucian mysticism.[31]

Most interesting in this summary of the various positions of scholars regarding the correct way in which the Chymische Hochzeit should be received is the suggestion that

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[31]Secret Societies, p.139.

it is a satire upon the other Rosicrucian works. It would suggest that either Andreae had not been involved in the production of the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio or that he had gone through a major change in his position. One of the most compelling arguments to this effect may be found in Andreae's own autobiography.

> Die Chymische Hochzeit, eine Posse, voll abentheurlicher Auftritte, erhielt sich. Zum verwunderen wurde es von einigen Geschätz, und durch seine Nachforschungen erklärt, da es ein unbedeutendes Werkchen ist, und die unnützigen Bemühungen der Neugierigen darstellt.[32]

Thus we see that although Andreae somewhat reluctantly admits to the creation of this work, his intentions in writing it are by no means clarified by this short reference. The autobiography itself has been questioned as to veracity because Andreae was under a great deal of pressure to prove his adherence to orthodox Lutheran dogma at the time of its writing. Andreae's vita indicates that the date of the initial draft of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz was around 1603 but most authorities agree that it must have been modified before its publication in 1616.[33] Richard Kienast, in his book on the Rosicrucian writings, makes a

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[32]Selbstbiographie, p.16.

[33]See J.W. Montgomery, Cross and Crucible, vol.1, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, p.38 and F.A. Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, p.67.

great deal of the choice of the name Christian Rosencreutz for the hero of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz. The "Christian" has its obvious theological implication and Rosencreutz he believes to refer to the Andreae family crest which incorporates a cross and roses. Kienast believes this to be a hidden indication of Andreae's authorship.[34] Will-Eric Peuckert further indicates that the name Rosencreutz only appears in the introduction to Fama Fraternitatis (the first of the Rosicrucian writings) and the first name "Christian" only appears in the later Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz.[35] This gives us some initial indication that the works may not have been conceived of as a unit and may not have been the work of the same author. This question of origin will become more important in our later discussion of the significance of this work.

In the course of this introduction, we have only touched on the surface of the complex problems that the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit present to the literary scholar. Separation in time and the combined complications of anonymity and retraction make the task of the student of literature more

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[34] Johann Valentin Andreae und die vier echten Rosencreutzer-Schriften, pp. 39-40.

[35] Das Rosenkreutz, p. 46.

difficult. Not only this but the accompanying difficulty of deliberate or accidental misinterpretation of fiction as fact has not been considered in depth. Rosicrucian movements which have been formed since shortly after the publication of the three original texts have directed much of theirs efforts towards the falsification of the literary history of their movements. In England the society of the Golden Dawn had the not inconsiderable assistance of William Butler Yates in its efforts to fictionalize the history of the reception of the Rosicrucian works. In Germany, Goethe and Lessing aided the expansion of the Rosicrucian myth through their involvement with Freemasonry.

The next chapter will present the theoretical basis of this study. This chapter will deal with the approach to the text which is based upon Eco, Jauß, Jakobson, Todorov and others. The difficulty of changing genre definition and reader approach will be considered. The Rosicrucian texts will be considered as an early example of a phenomenon which still exists and which seems to cross normal genre boundaries. That is, the literary text which seems to blur in the eyes of its readers and cross over the borders of fiction into the realm of reality. Some attempt will be made to link this to the combination of imagination and the construction of a more or less coherent alternate reality which allows the reader to participate more actively in the world of fic-

tion than is normally possible. In addition to this material there will be an attempt to describe the three Rosicrucian texts as an example of the evolution of the novel form. The mixing of fact and fiction will be explained as it relates to the development of the novel from the genre of travel literature as well as the Romance and journalistic report.

In the third chapter of this study the Rosicrucian texts will be discussed as examples of the genre of the fantastic. The theoretical model of Tzvetan Todorov will be applied to the texts with the intent of demonstrating the strengths and weaknesses of a structuralist approach to literature belonging to a period in which strong definitions of prose genre had not yet developed.

In our forth chapter the relationship of the Rosicrucian texts to science-fiction will be discussed. Here we will view the nature of the texts as an interaction between a scientifically (alchemically) aware audience and author. Special attention will be paid to the immense audience participation in the genre as well as the common occurrence of science fiction being mistaken for fact.

In the fifth chapter the Rosicrucian texts will be compared to the Sherlock Holmes texts by Conan Doyle and others. The existence of Holmes societies and numerous works discussing the fictional detective as if he had really existed provides grounds for dealing with this matter.

J.R.R. Tolkien's remarkably successful series The Lord of the Rings will be considered as another example of an apparently purely fantastic text being taken up by its readership and dealt with as if it were real. The Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit will be presented as the foundation for a discourse of Rosicrucianism which is expressed in both literary and non-literary formats.

In chapter six the descendants of the Rosicrucian tales will be presented. The discourse of Rosicrucianism introduced in chapter five will be demonstrated as it is represented in continuations of the three original tales. The remarkable reaction to the tales of Christian Rosencreutz which has continued until our own time, will be discussed, including use made of this figure by authors in other times. Works by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Robert Anton Wilson and Thomas Vaughan and others will form the basis of this discussion.

The conclusion of this dissertation will link all of the elements which have been presented in the body of the text. That is, the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit will be shown to be examples of a literary phenomenon that, through structure which defies normal forms of classification, has given rise to a small but vigorous body of related material. The thread of

Rosicrucian texts, fictions and societies demonstrates the way in which the lack of a single, obvious niche has added to the power of the text.

It is hoped that in the course of this dissertation some indication of the way in which a more comprehensive approach to the problem at hand will proceed. The Rosicrucian writings do not deserve to be buried under the weight of occultist pressure to cover up their true history and multifaceted sphere of influence. Due to the obfuscating nature of the history of the reception of these three texts many competent scholars have avoided the issue of the literary nature of the texts in search of religious, occult or even political goals .

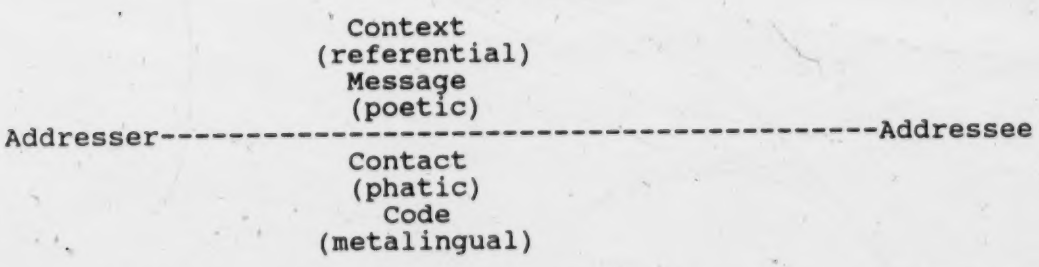
Theory: Work, Audience, Generic Code

As indicated in the Introduction, the Fama Fraternitatis, the Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit have remained the domain of those who are interested in these works solely from one of the perspectives encouraged by their interpretation as religious, utopian, or literal, historical explications of a secret order. Even in the early part of the seventeenth century , when they first appeared, the Rosicrucian texts caused much controversy simply because of the multiplicity of ways in which their audience interpreted them. From a modern perspective it seems obvious that these texts must have elements of indeterminacy inherent in their structure which make it impossible for the reader to arrive at a definitive method of interpretation. I hope, in the course of this dissertation, to deal with both the textual and extratextual elements which contribute to this situation.

In order to begin a logical analysis of the Rosicrucian texts and the phenomena surrounding them, we must first come to some basic understanding of the relationship between author, audience and text. It would serve little purpose to continue to describe the phenomenon of audience reaction without first dealing with the dynamics involved in the creation and distribution of texts in general. After this

structure has been clearly represented, the presentation of the theoretical tools that can help us deal with the special problems of the Rosicrucian texts and the enigmatic history of their reception will follow.

One of the primary theoretical works which I will apply in the endeavor to understand the basic relationship of author, text and reader will be Umberto Eco's The Role of the Reader.[1] In this book, Eco outlines an approach to the understanding of texts which is based in part upon Roman Jakobson's scheme of the functions of language. That is:



It is the text itself which provides the relationship between the adresser and the addressee. In this diagram the essential function of the text as a communicative exercise is determined by its emphasis upon one of the elements which are listed between the addresser (author) and the addressee (reader). For example, a text which focuses on the referential function would be designed for the transference of

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[1]Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1979.

information concerning the signified. Scientific textbooks or cookbooks would be examples of this sort of text. On the other hand, works of "art" which are intended for the aesthetic appreciation of their audience depend heavily upon the poetic function of language which is designated "Message" by Jakobson. Very few texts would be focused upon the phatic function of language unless we include communications sent by technicians in order to ascertain if their channels of communication are in order. (i.e. telecommunication and computer file upload and download testing.)[2]

However, it is obvious that in texts which are published in serial form the phatic function of language must play some role. The author seeks to maintain the contact with an audience which was established for earlier works. In the Rosicrucian texts the second of the series--the Confessio Fraternitatis--attempts to develop contact with an audience that may not have been overtly selected by the original Fama Fraternitatis. The Confessio Fraternitatis seeks to affirm the veracity of the tale told in the Fama Fraternitatis as well as to make even more explicit the Protestant bias that is implicit in the earlier work. The

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[2]One might include the type of love-letter which conveys little in the way of actual information but simply serves to maintain the contact between the addresser and the addressee.

third text--the Chymische Hochzeit--in its concentration upon the poetic, attempts to develop another audience for the series. It is possible to consider this aspect of the text as both phatic and metalingual. That is, we may consider the Chymische Hochzeit to be an artistic effort to develop new means of communicative expression.

The significant portion of the audience who treated the Chymische Hochzeit as a textbook written in encrypted form intended to give the reader keys to arcane alchemical procedures presents us with another aspect of communication which is not easily subsumed--in a direct fashion--under the Jakobson diagram. All three texts are linked in a logical series which pushes the emphasis of each text from one function of language to another depending upon how one chooses to interpret the other two. It is for this reason that the question of authorship has become so significant to scholars concerned with the Rosicrucian texts. If Andreae can be considered the author of all three, then the statements he made concerning the Chymische Hochzeit may be applied to all three of the texts. If he was not involved in the production of the Fama Fraternitatis or the Confessio Fraternitatis then the meaning of the Chymische Hochzeit may be differently construed.

For this reason it is obvious from even a superficial

inspection of this diagram that it does not deal, to any great extent, with the problems presented by the variation of codes between the addresser and the addressee. Although Jakobson's diagram allows for variation in the codes, it does not elaborate upon this possibility. In The Role of the Reader Eco divides texts into two basic categories; the "open" and the "closed." These terms depend on the way in which the addresser and the addressee communicate through the medium of the text. However, Eco makes it very clear that he does not wish to introduce extratextual elements into his discussion:

> To postulate the cooperation of the reader does not mean to pollute the structural analysis with extratextual elements. The reader as an active principal of interpretation is a part of the picture of the generative process of the text.[3]

Eco goes on to discuss two basic types of works, the open text and the closed. As the open text is a relatively recent phenomenon, it would seem to have little relevance to the matter at hand. However, Eco's statements concerning the ideal reader for the closed text have a particular significance when applied to the question of the Rosicrucian writings:

> In the process of communication, a text is frequently interpreted against a background of codes different from those intended by the author.

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[3]The Role of the Reader, p. 4

> Some authors do not take into account such a possibility. They have in mind an average addressee referred to a given social context. Nobody can say what happens when the actual reader is different than the "average" one. Those texts that obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers . . . are in fact open to any possible "aberrant" decoding.[4]

Eco deals with the specific problem of distinguishing between a fictional text and a conversational counterfactual conditional in The Role of the Reader. He says that there is a definite difference between warning a girl what may happen to her if she "accepts the courtship of a libertine"[5] and the plot of the novel Clarissa. However, he later warns that the difference is based upon factors which may not always hold true and "It is usually possible to transform a non-narrative text into a narrative one."[6] How much more confusing is the issue when we are presented with a series of texts which have no major indication as to whether they should be taken as fictional or non-fiction. We have, of course, from our historical perspective the ability to discern certain impossible conditions which are present in the narrative of the three Rosicrucian works, but to the audience of the period this was not the case. Therefore, it

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[4]The Role of the Reader, p.8.

[5]The Role of the Reader, p.12.

[6]The Role of the Reader, p.12.

is apparent that the genre and mode determination of an enigmatic group of works like the Rosicrucian texts may change radically with historical distance. The common sense notion that the contemporary audience will have more insight into the nature of a given text is often refuted. For an obvious example, one may take the famous Ossian hoax that led even Goethe to be mistaken about the genre of the texts in question.

Eco's system is of great value when applied to works like the three original Rosenkreutzer Schriften in that it will allow us to discuss the relationship between the textual coding and the widely varying responses of the readership. These works, although published long before any conception of the "Open" text was developed, have the interesting property of extreme textual ambiguity. Combined with this is the history of publication which seems to indicate a desire on the part of those responsible for the texts to maintain a certain ambiguity concerning the system of codes which the reader should apply to their interpretation. For this reason, although we cannot speak of a text which is in any way as complex and well designed as the works of James Joyce, which serve Eco as the paradigm of the "Open" text, we may hope to discover, through a study which deals with the ambiguities inherent in the text, some of the character-

istics that contribute to the wealth of possibilities inherent in the open text.

At first glance it may seem unwise to attempt to apply this scheme of "Open" and "Closed" texts to the Rosicrucian publications. Although it may seem that the conscious development of a variety of possible interpretations by an author was conceived of as an artistic technique only recently, this is not the case. Dante, in his letter to Can Grande della Scalla mentions four levels of interpretation: the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical.[7] In fact, Baroque literature is notable for its concentration upon didactic art forms. All good texts were supposed to have an overtly expressed moral.

Nevertheless, in the case of the Rosicrucian texts there are mitigating circumstances. There is an aura of literary hoax surrounding all three works. As mentioned in our introduction, the Fama Fraternitatis was bound with a satirical work when it was first published. The Confessio Fraternitatis makes claims to veracity that are obviously untrue, and the Chymische Hochzeit is referred to by its author as a joke which was taken far too seriously by a gullible audience. When we combine this information with the

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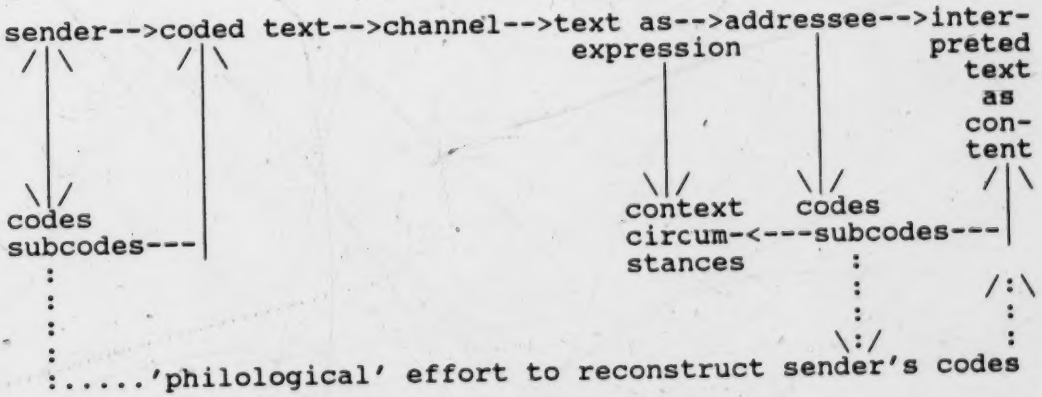
[7]Dante Alighieri, "Letter to Can Grande della Scala", in Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden, ed. Allan H. Gilbert, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982, p.202.

fact that the texts were published separately over a period of several years, we may make some comparisons between the apparently deliberate literary hoax and the phenomenon of the open text. It would appear the writer(s) of the Rosicrucian texts not only took into account the misinterpretation of their texts but seized upon this opportunity presented by the somewhat unexpected reaction and began to play with the reader's projected response.

It is because of Eco's position on the active role of the addressee in the process of textual interpretation that he proposes the following model which corrects some of the deficiencies of Jakobson's:[8]



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[8] The Role of the Reader, p. 5

This is, of course, only the beginning of Eco's attempts to recreate visually the complex system of relationships involved in the literary system. However, it seems quite adequate for the purposes of this discussion.

As is implied by this scheme, Eco believes that the author must assume that the codes he chooses to use will be shared, at least to some extent, by his reader. (This hypothetical reader is termed the "Model Reader"). This ensemble of codes will include language, literary style, genre etc. From this we see that, in a sense, the text constructs the "Model Reader" with a series of choices of textual keys. In the "Open" text Eco believes that these codes are selected carefully so that they create a multiplicity of "controlled" interpretations. On the other hand, in the "Closed" text the codes are relevant to such a narrow spectrum of "Model Readers" that they have a paradoxical effect. Instead of strictly controlling the way in which the reader may interpret the text the codes in the "Closed text" are open to wildly variant interpretations by readers who do not fit the author's intended profile.

It would seem appropriate at this point to give a general discussion of the approach that we will take with regard to each element of this diagram. In the first place, as far as the Rosicrucian texts are concerned, the sender is an enigma. It is fruitless to follow in the footsteps of the

general trend of critical work on these texts and attempt to deal with the problem of the "true" author. However, the coded text presents us with few of the problems common in the work of students of classical literatures. We do not have to worry about an abundance of hand-copied versions of the text at hand. Of course, we must deal with the variations inherent in texts which are translated. There are, of course, no manuscripts of the Rosicrucian texts available, but it would seem reasonable to deal with the coded text in their role as the channel. If this approach is taken then the study of the codes and subcodes may be extended to include the channel. That is, the choice of medium, the fact that the Fama Fraternitatis appeared in print bound with another work, the choice of the alchemical publishing house of Zenzner, and the anonymity of the author. [9]

The section of this study dealing with the text as expression will be centered around the context and circumstances in which it was received. That is, a general study

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[9]An example of the constant controversy over the reasons for the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis bound with the Algemeine Reformation may be found in Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel's Utopian Thought in the Western World: "Conceivably, Boccalini's jest mocked the popular reform proposals of previous ages as an introduction to the unveiling of a true reformation...It was the opinion of the Lutheran alchemist Michael Maier in 1618 that the binding of the Allgemeine Reformation and the Fama in 1614 was simply a bookseller's device." pp 292-3.

of the literary environment at the time of the publications. This of course will lead to a discussion of the possible codes and subcodes which were applied at the time. The three original Rosicrucian texts will be initially discussed as separate entities. However, the usage of textual indicators to select and hold an audience will be investigated as they apply to each individual text as well as an attempt to consider them as a (serial) unit.

The original Fama Fraternitatis obviously applies certain textual codes in order to direct itself towards an already present audience interested in the occult as well as tales of the exotic. The next work, the Confessio Fraternitatis plays upon a certain conceptual framework which has been developed by the Fama Fraternitatis. It seeks to assure its readers that it is not a hoax, but rather the manifesto of an existing, mystical brotherhood. Furthermore, the Confessio Fraternitatis seeks to delimit strictly this framework as an exclusively Protestant phenomenon.[10] (This despite the obvious paradox involved in a Protestant society

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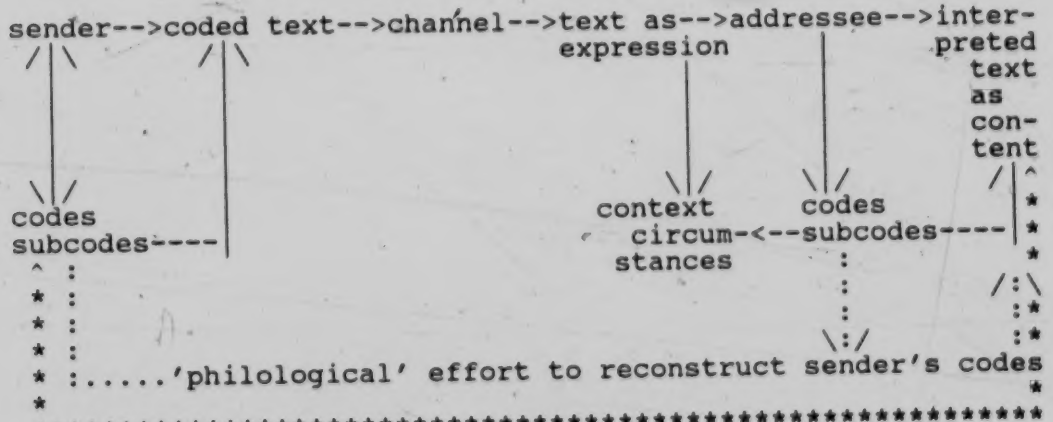
[10]The similarity of the word Rosenkreutz to the Catholic term Rosenkrantz may have led some of the initial audience to suspect involvement of the hated Papists. In later manifestations of the Rosicrucian myth the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is often linked with Rosicrucianism. See our last chapter for a discussion of the conspiracy theories that abound in both Rosicrucian fiction as well as practicing secret societies and pseudo-histories.

originating in the early part of the fifteenth century.) The third work, the Chymische Hochzeit, progresses even further upon the development of the code system which was created in the first two Rosicrucian texts. In the Chymische Hochzeit Andreae has begun to place emphasis upon the poetic function of the language of the text. It is a work of art in the more common sense of the word. If we see the three texts as a unit, then we see that like the "Open" text Eco has described in The Role of the Reader the audience has been created in the course of the text. Unlike the single text which is published at once (we exclude here the phenomenon of the Feuilleton and the novel serialized in a magazine), the series of publication allows for an interaction between the codes of the addresser and the addressee which is not foreseen in Eco's diagram. For this reason I take the liberty of adding another path.



This "Channel of Cross-References" serves to further the communicative efforts between addresser and addressee in any sort of serialized text. This also includes works of a given author which have served to develop a literary "type." Development of this sort has not been restricted (at least in modern times) by the boundaries of genre. Take for example Eco's discussion of the James Bond novels by Ian Flemming.[11] During the course of the author's career, a clear development of the conventions and situations available to Bond could be found. After the novels were taken up by the movie industry this development underwent radical changes which reflected the modification of the screenwriters' codes in response to the expressions of the audience's tastes. James Bond became, in effect, a parody of himself. It is my suggestion that in the case of the Rosicrucian texts this channel of movement between the codes involved in creation and those involved in interpretation of the texts was extremely important.

In some ways this "Channel of Cross-Reference" is similar to the concept of intertextuality in that it includes references in one text to another. However, the "Channel of Cross-Reference" is intended to represent an

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[11] The Role of the Reader, pp. 144-172.

ongoing process serving a specific function in the evolution of the kind of texts discussed here. A "Channel of Cross Reference" aids in the development of a discourse which surrounds texts of this sort.[12]

Eco is not the only literary theoretician whose work on the nature of the relationship between the producer and the consumer of the text is applicable to the Rosicrucian problem. If a text is considered to be literature it is often difficult to determine the genre to which it should be assigned, especially when we deal with works far enough removed from us in time or cultural context that the original purpose of their author is no longer obvious to us.

In his article "The Demarcation of Literature and the Reader," Uri Margolin also addresses the problem of how to distinguish between the literary and the non-literary text

> Another case involves the blending of the distinguishing features of literary and non-literary kinds of texts in one and the same text, such as Heine's travelogues or Truman Capote's In Cold Blood, which compound traditional novelistic traits with those of the factual, journalistic chronicle. Here again it is only the channel and the communicative situation which can decide what function, role and attitude are most appropriate to this text...If, however, the context itself is indeterminate or mixed, a clear decision

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[12]A more complete discussion of the Rosicrucian texts as a developing discourse may be found in the fifth chapter of this dissertation which relates the Rosicrucian phenomenon to other similar literary manifestations.

> concerning the status of the text cannot on principle be reached by the reader. He will be genuinely baffled, and different readers will indeed endow the same text in such cases with different functions, all of them being equally justified under the circumstances. [13]

This situation is precisely the case in the three Rosicrucian texts. However, it would seem that rather than a situation caused by accident, the Rosicrucian texts were written with multiple interpretation in mind.

That the question of the designation of the literary text has long been a problem dear to the hearts of students of literature is attested to by its presence in one of the most important and influential documents from the beginnings of speculation upon the nature of literature; that is, Aristotle's Poetics. Aristotle complains about the custom in his own day of calling an author a poet because of the verse form in which he writes:

> Even if a theory of medicine or physical philosophy be put forth in a metrical form, it is usual to describe the writer in this way [as a poet]; Homer and Empedocles, however, have really nothing in common apart from their meter; so that if one is to be called a poet, the other should be termed a physicist rather than a poet.[14]

In this argument, the intra-textual sign of verse form

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[13]Uri Margolin, "The Demarcation of Literature and the Reader," in Orbis Litterarum, 1976, 31, pp. 1-29.

[14]Aristotle, De Poetica, trans. by I. Bywater, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Random House, 1941, pp. 1455-6.

was enough to cause the general public of Aristotle's day to consider the writer a poet, and the natural corollary, the work poetry. In other words, the genre expectations of the audience was limited to this one consideration. Aristotle proposes that this be expanded to include subject matter as well.

The case of Aristotle's hope to modify the way in which his contemporaries defined the difference between poetry and non-literary writing can be more clearly understood if it is placed within the framework of Hans Robert Jauß's theory of the horizon of expectations of the audience ("Erwartungs-horizont.") This concept is central to his seminal essay "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissen-schaft." It is in effect, a system of expectations the reader applies to the work of art. It includes not only his notions of the form of the genre he deals with but also, the content, that is, system of ideas that it should express. Aristotle's contemporaries saw no difficulties in accepting what we would consider widely different works (i.e. scientific texts and literary texts) as one, simply on the grounds of their verse form. Thus their horizon of expecta-tions was not limited by the criteria of conceptual content. For this reason Jauß postulates:

Die Geschichtlichkeit der Literatur beruht nicht

> auf einem post festum erstellten Zusammenhang "literarischer Fakten", sondern auf der vorgängigen Erfahrung des literarischen Werks durch seine Leser.[15]

The extra-textual element of the reader's expectations of what should be found in a given text constitutes the way in which Jauß considers that the history of the work of art should be studied. However, Jauß does believe that this extra-textual horizon of expectations can be made objective within the body of a given text. The best possible cases of this objectification are those works which parody a given genre or literary tradition.

> Der Idealfall der Objektivierbarkeit solcher literarhistorischen Bezugsysteme sind Werke, die den durch eine Gattungs-, Stil- oder Formkonvention geprägten Erwartungshorizont ihrer Leser erst eigens evozieren, um ihn sodann Schritt für Schritt zu destruieren . . .[16]

In Jauß's opinion the parody would have the extra-textual indications of a given literary type or genre presented in open form but then destroyed in order to present another set of expectations. The way in which the audience reacts to the difference between its expectations and what the work presents is for Jauß the criterion for its

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[15]H.R. Jauß, "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft," in Rezeptionsästhetik: Theorie und Praxis, ed. R. Warning, München: Wilhelm Fink, 1975, p.128.

[16]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft," p.132.

aesthetic worth.

> Die Distanz zwischen Erwartungshorizont und Werk, zwischen dem schon Vertrauten der bisherigen ästhetischen Erfahrung und dem mit der Aufnahme des neuen Werkes geforderten "Horizontwandel", bestimmt rezeptionsästhetisch den Kunstcharakter eines literarischen Werks.[17]

He goes on to say that the nearer the work is to the expectations of the audience, the closer it comes to culinary or entertainment literature.

This system of a more or less objective notion of the form and content of a given type of writing being compared with the actual expression of writing has some difficulties when applied to the Rosicrucian texts. It is not always obvious in what category they should be placed. This is true not only for the modern student of literature for whom it is impossible to determine exactly the expectations of the audience of the seventeenth century, but it seemed also difficult for the contemporary audience. The harsh environment of religious struggle and the unending search for the heterodox within each of the two major religious groups made it difficult, even dangerous, for those who wished to publish in any given genre. Religious tracts which were anything less than a repetition of accepted church policy carried with them severe penalties for author, publisher and

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[17]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft," p.133.

even booksellers. Therefore, it is not surprising that enigmatic works like the three original Rosicrucian tracts were published without any clear indication of the author's intentions or even a framework which could give the audience a clue to the particular horizon of expectations they should apply to the works. The investigation of these texts must proceed cautiously, avoiding any preconceived notion of what will be found. The history of the study of the Rosicrucian texts has many examples of argumentum ad hominem in which the commentator assumes that Andreae was a Pansophist, Alchemist or orthodox Lutheran and therefore the works must conform to a certain pre-determined paradigm. Thus the genre is determined even before the works themselves are examined.

Jauß points out in his "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft":

> Im Dreieck von Autor, Werk und Publikum ist das letztere nicht nur der passive Teil, keine Kette bloßer Reaktionen, sondern selbst wieder eine geschichtsbildende Energie. Das geschichtliche Leben des literarischen Werks ist ohne den aktiven Anteil seines Adressaten nicht denkbar.[18]

The way in which the work is recieved by its audience in Jauß's opinion plays not only a role in the history of the individual work itself, but also in the history of lit-

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[18]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft", p.127.

erature as a whole. Jauß describes the concept of Konkretisation which he applies to the reader's reception of the work of art as being quite different than that which was developed by Roman Ingarden, i.e. the imaginative filling in of spots of indeterminacy present in the literary text.[19] Jauß states that his use of the term is rather that which is applied by the Prague school of Structuralism: the constantly new character the work gains through its reception by successive societies.[20] Jauß rejects completely the tendency of some literary theories to consider the work of art as being written only for the specialist: be he philologist or, as in the case of Marxist interpretation, the historian.

In a logical development of this basic position, Jauß distinguishes between two types of reading which he labels genießendes Verstehen and verstehendes Genießen.[21] That is, the difference between the primary experience of the act of reading, and the secondary reflection. In this way we see

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[19]See Roman Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature, trans. George C. Grabowicz, Evanston: Northwester University Press, 1973 pp 332-55.

[20]H.R. Jauß, "Racines und Goethes Iphigenie," in Rezeptionsästhetik: Theorie und Praxis, ed. Rainer Warning, München: Wilhelm Fink, 1975, p.355.

[21]H.R. Jauß, Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutic, vol. 1, München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977, p.9.

that both elements of the reception of the text are dealt with. The task of the student of literature is to clarify not only the process by which the text is made concrete to the modern reader, but also to understand the way that the text has been received by readers throughout the years of its existence. Thus the work of art assumes the character of a dialogue between its author and the successive generations of its readers. In this dissertation we will deal with the reception of The Rosicrucian texts by several groups of readers; those of the seventeenth century, and those of successive generations.

As indicated previously, this dissertation will also deal with the problem of multiple receptions of the texts within any given diachronic slice of its history. It is hoped that this will establish the nature of the dialogue between work and reader as well as provide some insight as to the way in which the development of genre definitions affect the way in which a given text is received by its audience. As we know, the reading of the work of art is affected by the previous experience of the audience. That is, their contact with other literature has developed in the readers an "Erwartungshorizont" or horizon of expectation to which the new work is compared. Thus when a literary work

departs radically from the accepted paradigms of previous works of art, in either its form or its content, it results in confusion as to the way in which it should be accepted. Jauß says:

> Der neue Text evoziert für den Leser (Hörer) den aus früheren Texten vertrauten Horizont von Erwartungen und Spielregeln, die alsdann variiert, korrigiert, abgeändert oder auch nur reproduziert werden. Variation und Korrektur bestimmen den Spielraum, Abänderung und Reproduktion die Grenzen einer Gattungsstruktur.[22]

From this it is plain that the history of art not only has an effect upon the reader's reception of the work but also upon the creation of new works. The writer is also a reader and his previous experience of literature as well as his knowledge of what is expected by his audience combines to form the production of the work, whether it be in channels already formed by the main stream of literature or as a deliberate overflowing of the banks. Jauß terms the distance between the Erwartungshorizont of the reader and the work the Horizontwandel.[23] The aesthetic reception of the work of art depends a great deal upon the extent of this variation between expectations and actual product. Therefore it is not uncommon for a new work which breaks the bounds of what is

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[22]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft", p.131.

[23]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft", p.133.

expected by its intended audience to meet, at first, with little or no enthusiasm. However, later, as the variations in the execution of the work develop into a recognizable school the audience becomes more willing to accept it. Of course, the opposite may also occur. A work of art which fulfills completely and without surprise, the expectations of its intended audience may soon fall into disfavor as tastes change. Literature which holds no surprises for its readership is termed by Jauß kulinarisch or Unterhaltungskunst.[24]

As we shall see in the following sections of this dissertation, the Rosicrucian texts were by no means a simple fulfillment of the expectations of any of the audiences which have received them in the past three hundred and seventy three years. Because of the difficulties in categorizing the texts the reader is presented with a multiplicity of possible receptions. This means that we must systematically investigate the various genres and sub-genres that are applicable to the Fama Fraternitatis, the Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit.

The codes Eco speaks of may be considered, for the purposes of this discussion, roughly equivalent to the horizon

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[24]"Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft", p.133.

of expectations mentioned by Jauß. Both are a sort of extra-textual paradigm or model to which the text must conform in order to be accepted in a given genre, or, for that matter, even to be considered a work of art.

An important element in the reception of the Rosicrucian texts--this enigmatic interaction between audience and writer--was the context of the gradual creation of the genre of novel. The Rosicrucian texts appeared in a time in which the genre of novel had not fully developed. In his book Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel,[25] Lennard J. Davis speaks of the difference between the structure of Cervantes' Don Quixote and the later representations of the novelistic genre.[26] Like Jauß, Davis believes that the expectations of the audience play a great part in the reception of a text. However, he goes even further and extends the expectations of the audience backwards into the process of creation of the text. He believes the expectations of the audience to be an important part of the structure of the novel:

> Books come to readers who have specific expectations of what they are going to be reading, what a narrative is or should be, what they will need to have in such a narrative and so on...One

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[25]Lennard J. Davis Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel. New York: Columbia UP, 1983.

[26]Cervantes wrote Don Quixote at almost the same time as Andreae wrote the Chymische Hochzeit.

> might conceive of this expectation as kind of a conceptual aura, a presentational context, which surrounds the book as object and which, for the sake of convenience I will call the "prestructure" of the work. The term is used to indicate that this presentational context is actually as much a part of the work as the elements of plot, character, development, and so on.[27]

Davis believes that the genre of novel, in its early stages, had a different relationship with the truth than it later developed. He bases this theory, at least in part, upon the development of journalism. As soon as the art of printing was developed the threat that the rapid dissemination of information posed was realized by those in power and attempts were made to limit it. Publications suspected of religious hetrodoxy were strictly prohibited throughout German speaking countries as well as in England. Nevertheless, news-sheets, religious tracts, and--most importantly to the discussion at hand--alchemical texts circulated widely. An audience, hungry for information, expressed its approval and bought what could be presented. For this reason, authors of "pure" fiction were sailing between Scylla and Charribdis. On one hand, they had to convince their audience that what they wrote was true, and on the other they were well advised to avoid persecution by the authorities. Unlike the reader of the earlier genre of

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[27] Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel. p. 12.

Romance, like Amadis of Gaul (1508), the seventeenth century reader had a desire to accomplish something through his reading.

Percy Adams in his Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel also concludes that journalism was a contributor to the development of the novel form.[28] However, Adams complains that another genre, equally--if not more--important to the development of the novel has been passed over:

> In fact, the neglect of travel literature as a contributor to and a relative of the novel has until recently been almost uniform...Typical of that neglect is Claude F. Jones, who in his "list" of "the major writings which fed into the novel proper up to the eighteenth century" (1956) includes no references to travels except for one entry...[29]

Adams goes on to rejoice that the travel tale has begun to assume its true significance as a major source of the novelistic form. "But now there are significant attempts to "shift" the Récit de voyage to the position of "Dominant."[30]

This explains some of the manifestations of the

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[28]Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983, p. 33.

[29]Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel, p. 35.

[30]Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel, p 35.

Rosicrucian phenomenon. The fact that the first publication, the Fama Fraternitatis, sets forth a short travel tale in the trappings of a true account is completely in harmony with this. The travel tale has a long and illustrious history as a form of entertainment. It was not uncommon for the authors of texts delineating the travels of crusaders to the Middle East to include wild stories about dragons and monsters. These texts served the dual function of guides to far off lands for explorers as well as entertainment for those who chose to stay at home. The expectations of the audience presented with the Fama Fraternitatis was therefore balanced between delight in exotic tales and a desire to be instructed.

Adams comments on the popularity of the fictional travel tale:

> Closest of course to the novel is the story put together by a real traveler, or by a fireside traveler, who employs accounts already published and creates a narrative partly or wholly fake but at the same time so realistic, so much like other books, that he is able to deceive readers for a few years, perhaps for a century, perhaps forever. The number of these fictious, or partly fictious, travel books is so great that one can merely suggest a few significant variations. The name of the author of Sir John Mandeville (c. 1356) will probably never be known; but his book--no matter how much we praise his genius--is certainly a fabrication that may have failed to fool a few educated people but that for perhaps three hundred years fooled most and was even considered genuine

when Marco Polo's story was not.[31]

The relationship of Mandeville to the Rosicrucian tales is not limited to the Fama Fraternitatis in its aspect as a travel tale. The series as a whole shares with Mandeville the dubious honor of being able to boast that it fools audiences centuries after publication. There still exist those who would swallow wholesale the story of a secret mystical society formed by Brother Christian Rosencreutz and existing to this day.[32] It would seem that a great deal of the appeal of both works rests upon the ability of their respective authors to recognize the expectations of their intended audience and to play upon that Erwartungshorizont. Andreae was no stranger to travel. During the period of his temporary expulsion from Tübingen University he traveled extensively in Switzerland and Italy. His Selbstbiographie is considered a prime source of a traveler's description of the Calvinist society in Geneva when he visited there.[33]

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[31]Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel, p 73.

[32]The last chapter of this dissertation will deal with the phenomenon of "real" Rosicrucian societies and their relationship with the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit as well as subsequent fictions based on the Rosicrucian theme.

[33]See Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel Utopian Thought in the Western World, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, p 307.

The second publication, Confessio Fraternitatis, was a logical reaction to the information passed back along "the Channel of Cross Reference." That is, the desire of the audience to believe this exotic tale was combined with doubt. The Confessio Fraternitatis, sought to alleviate this doubt by confirming the existence of the Rosicrucian society and the knowledge that the traveler (brother C.R.) had brought back from the East. The third work, the Chymische Hochzeit bears little resemblance to the almost pamphlet-like structure of the first two. It is more like a novel than any of the preceding, and many of the subsequent publications on the topic. The audience's desire for fiction, clothed in the garb of reportage and religious teaching was communicated to Andreae and he produced a work of art. This example brings to mind modern conceptions of the novel as an expression of pleasure for the reader.[34]

In the Chymische Hochzeit the character of C.R. becomes an individual and the reader can identify with him in his fictional plight. The pamphlet structure of the first two Rosicrucian texts develops a framework of expectations about the Chymische Hochzeit that allows its patently fictional

[34]An example of this means of dealing with the text may be found in Roland Barthes' "From Work to Text" in Debating Texts: Readings in 20th Century Literary Theory and Method ed. Rick Rylance, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987, pp 117-22.

elements to be accepted as an allegorical representation of the mystic adventures of the character. It does not break up the series but rather elaborates it.

The author(s) of the Rosicrucian texts seem to have been wavering on the border between fiction written for the sole purpose of idle entertainment and religious tracts created for the enlightenment of the reading public.

From the above discussion it is clear that the most interesting facet of the history of the reception of the Rosicrucian works is the way in which they seem to fit into many genres. The intentional indeterminacy of the author(s) has resulted in a series of texts that have for centuries-fascinated both the general public as well as students of literature. It would perhaps be easy at this point to move our inquiry towards an attempt to place the Rosicrucian texts in one of the modern genres and consider that we have done a service to literary scholarship, much like the entomologist may rest when he has pinned the butterfly to the board and neatly labeled its corpse. However, it is much more valuable--though more difficult--to explore the ways in which our rare specimen is similar to and different from various other types of literature. Literary scholarship is also served by the study of those items which have escaped categorization for it may help us to understand the

weaknesses of the taxinomic systems we apply.

Also, it must be emphasized that although this chapter makes some claim to be the theoretical foundation of this dissertation, it is by no means exhaustive of the critical works that have been used. As we have determined to approach the Rosicrucian texts from various sides we have selected the most appropriate or the most prominent critics of each genre. For example, Tzvetan Todorov's and Robert Scholes' work is used in the chapter on the Rosicrucian tales and fantastic literature (Chapter Three). In our chapter on Science Fiction (Chapter Four), Scholes and Todorov are supplemented by Darko Suvin and Kingsly Amis. Edward Said's notion of "discourse" has been applied in our chapter on the relationship of the Rosicrucian texts to other popular series (Chapter Five). Nevertheless, it is hoped that this discussion of some of the fundamental goals of this dissertation, as well as some of the difficulties presented by the material at hand has been of assistance in the elucidation of the Rosicrucian texts.

Fantasy and the Fantastic

In the preceding chapter we studied the problems presented to the literary scholar by the indeterminate structure of the three original Rosicrucian texts. This chapter is intended to demonstrate the way in which elements of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit would lead one to classify them as "fantasy" or "fantastic literature." To this end, a comprehensive definition of what is intended by the terms "fantasy" and "fantastic literature" is in order.

Relatively recently, as time is measured in the study of literature, the treatment of the writing of "fantastic literature" or "fantasy" has become the subject of scholarly inquiry. With the inclusion of these topics among those that may legitimately be discussed in the academic forum there has arisen the problem of how exactly one should delimit this "new" breed. This is, of course, not to say that "fantastic literature" had not existed for as long as literature itself; but rather to attempt to put the critical fence around the heretofore unbounded area. The Rosicrucian tales are a fine example of material that should be examined with the "new tools" of critical thought which have become available to the literary scholar.

There has been, and most probably will be for some time, a great deal of discussion of what exactly are the criteria by which we should recognize the fantastic elements in literature and the genre, if any, which is defined by these criteria. Should it be restricted to one period, should it be founded upon a social, psychological or structural basis? It is the purpose of this chapter to take some of the prevailing theories concerning the definition of the fantastic in literature and use them in order to discuss the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit.

One of the reasons that the Rosicrucian texts have been chosen as the basis of this study rather than a general investigation of the alchemical story is that they have a general air of intermediacy of meaning which other works in the same vein do not have. In the book Alchemia this difference from the main stream of alchemical texts is expressed as follows:

> Zwar ist der Alchemie eine der Wurzeln, aus der das Rosenkreuzertum entstanden ist, doch gewinnt dieses bald ein Eigenleben und weist Züge auf, die der Alchemie fremd sind: das Bestreben einen Bund zu gründen, und das Ziel, eine "Reformation der ganzen Welt" herbeizuführen.[1]

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[1]E.E. Ploss, H. Roosen-Runge, H. Schipperges, H. Buntz, Alchemia: Ideologie und Technologie, München: Heinz Moos, 1970, p.192

Nevertheless, these works have been neglected in respect to their fantastic elements until now and have often been included with the more technical alchemical allegories of other movements. In order to present these works as having elements which justify their inclusion in the category of "fantastic literature" we must first set out the basic outlines of the more important theories of the fantastic. The reason we have not selected a single theoretical approach to "fantastic literature" is that, as already mentioned in previous sections of this dissertation, the Rosicrucian tales are not consistent in form or conception. Therefore, it would be difficult to apply any single theory of the fantastic to all three works. Each text has its own character and provides unique elements for analysis as an example of fantastic literature. This is not to say that all three texts are inconsistent with any one theory of the fantastic, it is, rather, that all three have characteristics which may be brought out through the application of varying principles.

Eric Rabkin has developed a working definition of the terms "fantasy" and "the fantastic" in his The Fantastic in Literature,[2] part of which may be usefully applied to our study of the Rosicrucian texts.

> In capitalizing Fantasy, I wish to identify a particular genre whose defining characteristics

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[2]The Fantastic in Literature, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

> will shortly become clear; in referring to the fantastic, I intend to recall those structural properties we have discussed of the diametric reversal of the ground rules of a narrative world and the peculiar range of emotional affects associated with such reversals; by using fantasy, uncapitalized, I mean the lay definition... This hypothesis can be stated in an alternate fashion: the fantastic has a place in any narrative genre, but that genre to which the fantastic is exhaustively central is the class of narrative we call Fantasy. [3]

This definition is appropriate to our study because it allows us to indicate that there are elements of the Rosicrucian texts which are like the exclusive genre called "Fantasy" without demanding that we label these three texts as "Fantasy." Instead, we will use the term "fantastic literature" to indicate that the Rosicrucian texts contain elements of the fantastic without actually fitting into Rabkin's more restrictive definition.

The next, and perhaps the more influential, theoretician we will deal with is Tzvetan Todorov. In his major work on the fantastic entitled Introduction à la littérature fantastique he defines what he believes to be the major characteristics of the fantastic:

> Nous sommes maintenant en état de préciser et de compléter notre définition du fantastique. Celui-ci exige que trois conditions soient remplies. D'abord, il faut que le texte oblige le lecteur à considérer le monde des personnages comme un monde de personnes vivantes et à hésiter entre une

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[3] The Fantastic in Literature, pp. 28-9.

> explication naturelle et une explication surnaturelle des événements évoqués. Ensuite, cette hésitation peut être ressentie également par un personnage; ainsi le rôle de lecteur est pour ainsi dire confié à un personnage et dans le même temps l'hésitation se trouve représentée, elle devient un des thèmes de l'oeuvre; dans le cas d'une lecture naïve, le lecteur réel s'identifie avec le personnage. Enfin il importe que le lecteur adopte une certaine attitude à l'égard du text: il refusera aussi bien l'interprétation allégorique que l'interprétation 'poétique'. Ces trois exigences n'ont pas une valeur égale. La première et la troisième constituent véritablement le genre; la seconde peut ne pas être satisfaite. Toutefois, la plupart des exemples remplissent les trois conditions.[4]

The basic difference between Rabkin's theory and Todorov's is, as Rabkin himself indicates,[5] that Todorov places the emphasis in recognition of the "true" fantastic directly upon the reader's hesitation in interpreting events. On the other hand, Rabkin believes:

> First, this hesitation should not be seen in relation to external norms, but rather in relation to microcontextual variations; second, one must realize that in keeping track of this affect, and locating it in aspects of narrative other than plot can give us an organizing principle for studies larger than those of Todorov's "literary genre." His is a thoughtful, suggestive and useful book...but it is a book that ultimately reflects a different view of the fantastic.[6]

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[4]Tzvetan Todorov, Introduction à la littérature fantastique, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970, pp. 37-8.

[5]The Fantastic in Literature, footnote p.118.

[6]The Fantastic in Literature, footnote p. 118.

As Rabkin indicates, Todorov's concept of the fantastic is different than his own. Nevertheless, we will use aspects of both theories in our analysis of the Rosicrucian texts because these three works have elements that justify their inclusion (at least in part) in both definitions of the fantastic.

In this initial section of our discussion we will attempt to deal with the Fama Fraternitatis as a work of "fantastic literature." The main source of theoretical criteria will be The Fantastic in Literature. In the first section of his book, concerning the nature of the fantastic, Rabkin indicates that in this branch of literature we expect the contradiction of our expectations. He uses for his example Lewis Carrol's Alice stories, which are founded upon logical contradictions of fascinating complexity. However, the fantastic in literature need not be so subtle as the work of the Victorian mathematician. Rabkin believes that we are given various hints about the need to interpret an element of a text as fantastic.

> We have then three classes of signal for the fantastic: signals of the characters (such as Alice's astonishment), signals of the narrator ... and signals of the implied author (such as the narrative structures of Borges and Moorcoock). Each of these three types of signal may occur in any given work ...[7]

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[7]The Fantastic in Literature, p.24.

These signals are received in relation to certain ground rules that the reader develops for the interpretation of the work: "ground rules that are foisted upon the reader in large part by his whole life's training in the reading of literature and its many grapholects."[8]

Rabkin bases his notion of grapholect upon Roland Barthes' concept of écritures.

> Like dialects, grapholects mark the writing "voice" as coming from a particular time, place, and social group. The date of publication may or may not be active in one's mind during the reading of any given text, but the grapholect of that text, and the associated set of perspectives it vivifies is always present.[9]

Not only does the grapholect give us clues to the ground rules by which we interpret the text but also our general experience of the world. Therefore, the nature of a reader's experience and beliefs may be used by the author in his development of the fantastic. Rabkin gives as example the belief that the dead do not speak. This conception of the nature of reality is often contradicted in the development of a fantastic world.[10]

The heavy dependence of "fantastic literature" upon the knowledge and experience of the reader for its desired effect allows, of course, for the possibility of misinter-

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[8]The Fantastic in Literature, p.24.

[9]The Fantastic in Literature, pp. 20-1.

[10]The Fantastic in Literature, p.26.

pretation. However, there are many effects that may be produced entirely within the text that indicate the fantastic. Among these are surprise expressed by the narrator, or characters, at the course of events in the story. This also depends upon the grapholect, for it gives the reader more clues as to what the speaker may be expected to believe. That is, the format in which a statement is presented by the character, or narrator, gives the reader a visible clue as to the amount of credence he may lend to a given event within the microworld of the story.

This framework presents us with some interesting problems when applied to the Fama Fraternitatis. We have noted that the Fama Fraternitatis was published under exceedingly confusing circumstances. As it was published anonymously, we cannot look, even as a last resort, to the life of the author to gain an impression of the ground rules of his extra-textual reality. We may suspect that it was the young theology student Johann Valentin Andreae expressing his rebellion against standard Lutheran dogma, but if we are wrong, the whole nature of the message may change. Because the Fama Fraternitatis was bound with a more obvious satire, we could also consider it part of a collection criticizing radical notions of reformation and delivered by an arch conservative. Thus, even before we begin to consider the text

itself we are presented with a confusing array of possibilities.

Let us now deal with some of the clues to the fantastic presented within the text of the Fama Fraternitatis. We mentioned previously that Rabkin divides the signals for the fantastic into three basic classes; those coming from the characters, the narrator, and the implied author. The Fama Fraternitatis presents, in a sense, the combination of all three elements in one. The narrator is in effect a character (or group of characters) in that the "Wihr" which tells of Frater C.R.'s adventures represents the brothers of the mythical society of the Rosicrucians who later become active participants in the discovery of brother C.R.'s tomb. As very few authorities on the subject believe there was an actual society of Rosicrucians at the time of the creation of the text, it seems that the author has implied his character to the reader.

This narrator-character-author presents a view of the Middle East which ostentatiously includes great knowledge of Mathematics, Physics, Magic, etc. Despite the adherence of his teachers in the Holy Land to what the narrator considers to be a false religion, brother C.R. is able to use this knowledge in a fashion consistent with his own, Christian, precepts.

> Von diesen Fessanern [C.R.'s Arab teachers] bekend er oft daß ihr Magia nicht aller rein, auch die Cabala mit ihrer Religion befleckt were, nichtsoweniger wuste er sie ihm treflich nutz zu machen und befand noch bessern grund seines Glaubens ...[11]

The contrast between the science and occult skills of brother C.R.'s native land in his own time and the wisdom of the East is strongly emphasized. Later when C.R. returns to Europe, this dissimilarity is accentuated as C.R. attempts to impart to the learned men of his native continent the benefit of his newly acquired knowledge.

> Er zeigte ihnen [the wise men of Spain] newe Gewächs, newe Früchte, Thiere, die sich nicht nach der alten Philosophia richteten und gab ihnen newe axiomata für die Hand, so durchauß alles salvierten, aber es war ihnen alle lächerlich...[12]

This statement indicates to the reader that the physical laws generally accepted in the fifteenth century have been refuted by brother C.R. Later in the text we find that these discoveries would be considered marvelous even in the seventeenth century when the Fama Fraternitatis was published. The reactions of the narrator and the characters signal that these are fantastic elements of knowledge in both the past and present. If we consider the wise men of

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[11]Fama Fraternitatis, p. 19.

[12]Fama Fraternitatis, p. 19.

fifteenth century Spain as characters in this narrative, then their reaction is the clue which suggests there is something occurring that goes beyond the accepted reality of the period. Thus it is in that specific context an element of "the fantastic," as defined by Rabkin. At the same time, we must also admit that these discoveries are presented in an extremely rudimentary fashion. The plants, fruits, animals and axioms are not described so that they may be contrasted with an existing world, either within the framework of the text or with the external reality as perceived by the reader.

Within the microworld of the text it is affirmed that the precepts brother C.R. had presented are still as wonderful and durable in the time of the narrator(s):

> Ob wihr wohl freywillig bekennen, daß sich die Welt innerhalb hundert Jahren treflich gebessert, seynd wihr doch vergewissigt, daß unsere axiomata unbeweglichen werden bleiben, biß an den Jüngsten Tag ...[13]

The more precise delineation of the fantastic as it contrasts with the precepts of the everyday world is presented in the "modern" setting of the narrator(s). When the tomb of brother C.R. is discovered, it contains within it wonders which even amazed the brotherhood he had founded. For example, there is the matter of the interior lighting

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[13] Fama Fraternitatis, p. 21.

of the tomb: " ... ob es wohl von der Sonnen niemals bescheinet wurde, leuchtet es doch helle von einer andern ..."[14] In this statement we have a clear example of how the reader must use his knowledge in order to correctly interpret the grapholect. Although to the modern reader there is nothing intrinsically wonderful about a windowless chamber being provided with an artificial light, to the seventeenth century reader this was certainly an example of the contradiction with the ground rules of his world.

Later, when the brothers discover the body of their founder, it is whole and uncorrupted after an hundred years burial.[15] In this occurrence we have a classic example of a religious marvel. The bodies of saints and other great holy men are often said to be preserved for long periods after burial. This seems to be almost a convention generally accepted in tales of the fantastic dealing with religious topics. Of course, as with all recurring themes in literature there are examples of the opposite. That is, in this case, tales wherein the uncorrupted body is that of an evil man. An example of this is to be found in James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner where the body of a man who has made a pact with the devil remains

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[14]Fama Fraternitatis, p.24.

[15]Fama Fraternitatis, p.26.

uncorrupted in its grave.[16] In both cases the reader is asked to set aside the knowledge of the real world and accept the fact that a dead body under certain circumstances will not decay.[17] This is therefore an example of the fantastic element of the text being based upon the knowledge of the reader's own world rather than that of the text, or of the time in which the text was written. A further elaboration of this theme may be found in Michael Tournier's Le Roi des Aulnes:

> De l'amphi du professeur, Tiffauges retint qu'il s'agissait d'un de ces hommes des tourbières qu'on exhume périodiquement au Danemark et en Allemagne du Nord, et dont l'état de conservation, grâce à l'acidité du milieu, est si étonnant que les villageois croeint aussitôt à un accident ou à un crime récents. Or ce sont des anciens Germains dont l'immersion rituelle dans les bas-fonds tourbeux remonte soit au Ier siècle de notre ère, soit au siècle antérieur.[18]

In this modern, secular and scientific expression of the topos of the preserved corpse, a technical explanation is given which fits neatly into the world view of Tournier's

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[16]James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, (Bungay: Penguin, 1983), p. 233.

[17]Even if a reader in the seventeenth century could accept the fact that a corpse of an exceptional person would not rot he would have to class the occurrence as a "miracle" and therefore, by definition, outside of the normal physical laws of the universe.

[18]Michel Tournier, Le Roi des Aulnes Paris: Gallimard, 1970, p.292.

audience. What is a fantastic element in Hogg and the Fama Fraternitatis becomes explicable in a modern context. That is, it no longer falls into the category of "miracle" or exception of normal, physical laws.

Another interesting component of the Fama Fraternitatis is the language in which it is written. As we have mentioned earlier, in the period in which this text first was published, the German language was gaining reputation as a medium in which it was possible to convey serious thoughts. Latin was still the mainstay of the university and every educated man was able to communicate to his peers in it but there was a growing movement that suggested that the vernacular was also a viable alternative for serious writing. If we are to consider Andreae the author of this work, it is important to note that he was a member of a society concerned with the furtherance of the German language as a literary tongue. That is, the famous Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft.[19] Nevertheless, it was common practice to indicate that the author was at home in Latin through a liberal interspersion of that language in vernacular texts. This is, in effect, a key with which the contemporary audience of the Fama Fraternitatis may decipher the educa-

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[19]W. Begeman, Die Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft und Johann Valentin Andreae, Berlin: Mittler, 1911.

tion and therefore social position of its author. It begins with a complaint that intellectuals refuse to meet: "auch bey den Gelehrten der Stoltz und Ehrgeitz so hoch, daß sie nicht mögen zusammentreten ..."[20] This seems, in one sense, to be a self contradictory statement, because to frame the Fama Fraternitatis in German, rather than Latin, seems to give up the universal language of the intellectual. This becomes more confusing when we consider the statement later that brother C.R. had translated the book M. into "gut Latein"[21] Another example of the puzzling contradiction of the use of language in the Fama Fraternitatis is presented to the reader in the report of the inscription written on brother C.R.'s tomb.[22] It is, in effect, a summary of the story that has been told so far in the body of the Fama Fraternitatis. However, it is in Latin and thus makes the text available (or acceptable) to a different audience than the monolingual, German patrons.

When we consider this mixture of languages in the sense of a grapholect developed by the author in order to indicate to his audience certain basic positions of his narrative, the sense of the text becomes more clear. As already indi-

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[20]Fama Fraternitatis, p.17.

[21]Fama Fraternitatis, p. 18.

[22]Fama Fraternitatis, p.27.

cated, the use of Latin within the text indicated to the reader that the author was of a certain social and intellectual position. This gives the audience a picture of an implied author and some clues as to the way in which the text may be interpreted. Nevertheless, we must remember that although there is evidence directing the reader towards one kind of interpretation of the Rosicrucian texts, the history of their reception shows clearly that this evidence is never unequivocal. Though the Fama Fraternitatis may lead us towards one view of the meaning of the Rosicrucian series when taken as an individual text, if it is linked to the Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit, it is much more open to varying interpretations.

The second work, Confessio Fraternitatis, was first published in a bilingual Latin-German edition with the Fama Fraternitatis. It seems that by choosing to write in the language that was accessible to all, both the learnéd and not so learnéd, the author managed to speak to a very broad audience indeed. Also, the addition of a Latin text with the Fama Fraternitatis, which many considered to be of questionable origins, lent an air of authority that another German text on the same topic could not have accomplished.

Another aspect of the mixture of Latin and German in the text returns us to the question of the implied author.

Although Latin was the language of the Roman Catholic church, we know that the Fama Fraternitatis was written from a strongly Protestant viewpoint.

> Wir glauben auch festiglich, da unsere geliebte Vätter und Brüder weren in itiziges unsers helles Leicht gerathen, sie hetten dem Babst[Pope], Machomet, Schrifftgelehrten, Künstlern und Sophisten besser in die Wohl gegriffen ...[23]

Martin Luther, the founder of protestantism in Germany, made it one of his primary tasks to translate the Bible into his native language. Therefore, the use of German for a text that deals in part with religious matters is an indication of the religious affiliation of the actual author as well as an indication of the "implied author." In other words, not only the overtly antipapal statements like the above quotation indicate the world view of its implied author, but also the choice of language.

Another reason for the inclusion of the long passage in Latin that forms the inscription on brother C.R.'s tomb is the desire to create an air of historical accuracy. In the fifteenth century, the time of C.R.'s death, it is highly unlikely that any document of lasting importance would be written in any language but Latin. This choice of language, along with C.R.'s translation of the book "M." into Latin from Arabic[24] are details that help to create an air of

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[23]Fama Fraternitatis, p. 21.

[24]Important works of Greek scholarship, including those

verisimilitude, making the fantastic elements all the more prominent by reason of contrast. In the way Rabkin prescribes, the use of Latin in selected areas of the book has developed a grapholect that places the implied author and the historical details in a framework which will be bent out of shape by the references to wonders such as the prototypical lightbulb in C.R.'s tomb.

Rabkin says in his chapter concerning fantasy and escape:

> Escape literature includes "adventure stories, detective stories, tales of fantasy," pornography, westerns, science fiction and, when read for pleasure by adults, fairy tales. Escape literature, according to the conventional wisdom, "aims at no higher purpose than amusement." But in the notions of "higher purpose" and of adults reading in a genre "beneath" them, we see that even today we maintain vestiges of the old prescriptive criticism: some kinds of literature are inherently better than other kinds. However, whatever virtues this position may have, it does not help us address questions of the uses of the fantastic.[25]

He believes that escape literature offers the public escape from the restrictions imposed by the extra-textual world by providing an alternate set of ground rules. He

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of Aristotle were preserved by the flourishing Islamic culture of the nineth century and only later recovered and translated into Latin by Medieval scholars.

[25] The Fantastic in Literature, p.44.

affirms that the escape in literature is not retreat into chaos, but rather a fantastic reversal. The notion that one sort of literature is more acceptable than another has been important in the history of the reception of the Rosicrucian texts. Some believe that the author(s) must have had a serious purpose in writing the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit and therefore interpret them as religious allegory or a utopian call for the foundation of a mystic society. This judgmental attitude, when combined with the highly indeterminate nature of the Rosicrucian texts has resulted in interpretations which often exclude the possibility that the Rosicrucian texts were parodic in nature or even entertainment.

The fantastic elements that we have demonstrated so far to exist in the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis have for the most part been based on knowledge revealed to brother C.R. during his travels in the Middle East. This approaches what Rabkin calls the "adventure tale" in that brother C.R.'s odyssey in the East has the character of an adventure in which tales of far off lands are related.

As we have already indicated, the Fama Fraternitatis deals with two distinct modes of reality, that of the normal, educated Lutheran of the seventeenth century and the fantastic knowledge of the Rosicrucian brotherhood that has

been brought back from the Middle East by its founder. Yates notices this contrast, but interprets it differently:

> The meditative reader of the manifestos is struck by the contrast between the serious tone of their religious and philosophical message and the fantastic character of the framework in which the message is presented. A religious movement using alchemy to intensify its evangelical piety, and including a large programme of research and reform in the sciences, is surely an interesting phenomenon.[26]

Yates believes the Fama Fraternitatis to be in essence a religious allegory that has from time to time been taken as fact by the gullible. If, however, we put aside the obvious didactic elements of the tale we are still left with what amounted to a best selling tale of travel and fantastic marvels. This perspective helps us to resolve some of the problems presented by the allegorical interpretation. If the author had in mind an actual reformation of religion and science of his day, why did he not follow up on the enormous success of the Fama Fraternitatis? That is, why did he not found an actual Rosicrucian brotherhood with a membership drawn from the long list of supplicants who wrote open letters begging to join the followers of Christian Rosencreutz? This brings us back to the question of the author's intentions in the publication of the work. Richard

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[26]The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, p.49.

van Dülmen speculates that the Fama Fraternitatis may have been written by Andreae in conjunction with some of his friends at the university of Tübingen. He says of their opinion of its publication:

> Allerdings widerspricht es keinesfalls ihrer Intention, daß sie zusammen mit der "Allgemeinen Reformation" von Trajano Boccalini ...gedruckt wird. Im Gegenteil, die Satire von Boccalini erfreut sich besonderer Beliebtheit bei den Freunden Andreaes, vor allem bei ihm selbst und Besold.[27]

As mentioned previously, this translation of part of Boccalini's satire is obviously a work of fiction and makes no attempt to develop an image of the world as realistic as the Fama Fraternitatis. If indeed the author(s) of the Fama Fraternitatis did approve of its publication with this work, they probably expected the two works to be taken as fiction and not as a clarion call to a reformation. Granted, they may have intended the work to have the didactic effect of the sort of fiction that tries to teach some lesson through the presentation of a world which does not exist. That is, a utopia. There is no reason at all to exclude utopian fiction from the fantastic as Rabkin defines it. In fact, many of the examples he uses are from utopias or dystopias. The escape from the actual world is provided in the Fama Fra-

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[27]Richard van Dülmen, Die Utopie einer christlichen Gesellschaft: Johann Valentin Andreae, vol.I, (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978.), p.78.

ternitatis by the description of a brotherhood which will reform all of Europe. The knowledge that the Rosicrucian brothers are purported to have obviously transcends the possible but this does not detract from the value of the work as an expression of the desires of a society to be free from its bonds. The modification of the reader's perception of reality is sufficient to justify the work, although like most utopias it provides some practical hints for social reformation. As Rabkin says:

> Escape, then, is neither inherently frivolous nor inherently unrestrained ...In the literature of the fantastic, escape is the means of exploration of an unknown land, a land which is the underside of the mind of man.[28]

This view of "fantastic literature" is, as demonstrated by the above arguments, one aptly suited to the inclusion of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit. These three texts use the powerful desires for hidden knowledge and the search for benevolent wisdom in a fantastic manner. They reveal not only the desire of the audience to become involved in such "dreams" as fiction, but also the will to accept such wishes as reality. The "underside of the mind of man" in the case of the Rosicrucian texts is not inherently ugly, it is in many ways admirable.

In this section of our discussion of the Rosicrucian

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[28]The Fantastic in Literature, p.45.

texts as examples of "fantastic literature" we will apply the theoretical premises of Tzvetan Todorov. As mentioned earlier, Todorov determines "fantastic literature" by the application of three major criteria. The first is that the reader must view the world of the characters in the text as a world of living persons and he must hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events of the plot. The second is that this hesitation as to the natural or supernatural cause of events should be also represented in a character of the text with whom the reader may identify. The third criterion Todorov demands of "fantastic literature" is that the reader should refuse both allegorical and "poetic" interpretations of the text.

Let us look at the first of these elements in order to gain a perspective on the position of the Rosicrucian tales in this framework. How does the reader accept the information about the world that is presented in these stories? The answer to this question depends on the concomitant uncertainty of who read these stories? In general, the impression the modern public has of the alchemical tale is that the texts were perceived by their contemporary readers as an intermediate form possessing characteristics of both chemistry handbook and magical grimoire; texts kept by a few adepts and passed on to the chosen apprentice as a

treasure. With regard to the Rosicrucian writings as well as other "alchemical texts" of the early seventeenth century nothing could be further from the truth. They were not hand copied, but rather massed produced, and some printers, like Lazarus Zetzner made a good living from the sale[29]. Montgomery says of the matter: "In point of fact, alchemical publishing was at the forefront of Strasbourg printing activity ...The Zetzner firm was especially concerned with issuing alchemical works."[30] We should note that Zetzner was the publisher of the Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz.

When the early texts of the Rosicrucian movement appeared, they created a great deal of controversy and many famous men were accused of being members of the "invisible" brotherhood. For example, Frances Yates recounts an occurrence in René Descartes' life:

> It is surely one of the highlights or greatest moments in the extraordinary history of this extraordinary subject when Descartes shows himself to his friends in Paris to demonstrate that he is visible, and therefore not a Rosicrucian!![31]

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[29]Although there is reason to believe that the Famma Fraternitatis may have appeared as a manuscript several years before its publication, in this study we will concentrate upon the works as printed, public entities.

[30]Cross and Crucible, vol. 2, p.261.

[31]The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, p.116.

From this information we may conclude that at least some of the readership of the Rosicrucian texts accepted what they read to be a reflection of the real world to such an extent that they began to look for members of the fictional society among the people who surrounded them. It is difficult to answer the question of whether the readers of the seventeenth century hesitated between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events reported in the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit. The panic in Paris concerning the appearance of Rosicrucians which prompted Descartes' actions seems to indicate that some readers feared a society with allegedly supernatural powers. However, the general notion of alchemy was that it was a learned science rather than a truly "magical" power. That is, the alchemist knew of advanced techniques rather than ones which transcended nature.[32] In the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis the attitude towards alchemy is similar to modern science. However, in the Chymische Hochzeit we have a much less straightforward representation of the wonders of the Rosicrucians. Is it divine to reanimate corpses, even if the motive power is provided by indestructible souls?[33]

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[32]The Oxford English Dictionary defines supernatural as: That is above nature; belonging to a higher real or system than that of nature; transcending the powers or the ordinary course of nature.

This argument helps us to deal with the third criterion of Todorov's definition of the fantastic; that which excludes allegorical writing. In order to understand this aspect let us look more closely at what Todorov defines as allegorical and poetic:

> Il existe des récits qui contiennent des éléments surnaturels sans que le lecteur s'interroge jamais sur leur nature, sachant bien qu'il ne doit pas les prendre à la lettre. Si des animaux parlent, aucun doute ne nous vient: nous savons que les mots du texte sont à prendre dans un sens autre, que l'on appelle allégorique.
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> La situation inverse s'observe pour la poésie. Le texte poétique pourrait souvent être jugé fantastique, si seulement l'on demandait à la poésie d'être représentative. Mais la question ne se pose pas: s'il est dit, par exemple, que le 'je poétique' s'envole dans les airs, ce n'est qu'une séquence verbale, à prendre comme telle, sans essayer d'aller au-delà des mots.[34]

The generally accepted opinion is that the alchemical text requires a key or special knowledge which allows the reader access into the mysteriously presented material that is its content. As mentioned previously, a mainstay of the Strasbourg publishing industry was the alchemical text. The Rosicrucian works were especially popular and aroused much

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[33]The importance of the souls to the reanimation of the king and queen in the Chymische Hochzeit is recognized only by Christian Rosencreutz. The other alchemists involved in the work remain ignorant of this essential element. See the Chymische Hochzeit pp. 114-5.

[34]Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique, pp. 36-7.

public interest and many replies, both positive and negative. We must therefore ask: could so popular a medium be directed only at a few who knew some secret truth? Many of the replies to the three original Rosicrucian texts that were published consisted of pleas to the members of the fictional society by would-be members. Nowhere in the Rosicrucian texts does anyone go into a description of how to make gold, preserve life, or even tell the future by means of the stars. All of these practices are mentioned, but in the context of marvels, not as allegorical description of procedures. The supposed reality of these wonders is a literary device used to attract the attention of an audience that thirsted after stories of marvels from far off lands. This was the time when British, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and other explorers were exponentially expanding the empires of their respective countries. It seemed that anything could happen in a world with such flexible boundaries. The attitude of the audience towards marvels may be compared to the modern idea that technology may take us anywhere. The modern reader is willing to believe almost anything as long as it is wrapped up in an attractive package of pseudo-science.

The second qualification of Todorov's definition, that of involving the reader through identification with one of

the characters is also fulfilled in part by the Rosicrucian texts. The favored initiate, Christian Rosencreutz, guides us through the strange occurrences in the Chymische Hochzeit. He is just as confused as we are about the outcome of the events in the story, although he has some insight into the causes of a few of the wonders of the tale. In the two previous stories, Christian Rosencreutz is mentioned only in the third person by the collective narrators who are said to be contemporary members of the society he founded in the fifteenth century. There is no real character development of the sort required for Todorov's definition of "fantastic literature."

Thus we see from this summary of Todorov's criteria and their relation to the Rosicrucian tales that there are strong grounds for their inclusion, at least on the borderline, of fantastic fiction as he defines it. From this point we will proceed into a more precise discussion of the applicable elements of Todorov's definition of the fantastic.

In order to allow for the type of tale that is commonly understood to be "fantastic" but cannot measure up to his rather stringent definition, Todorov distinguishes separate subtypes within the fantastic. These are, the uncanny, the uncanny-fantastic, pure fantastic, marvelous-fantastic, and

the marvelous. Todorov further delineates the borders of the fantastic as follows: If an event that appears to be outside of the normal rules of the universe is found at the end of a story to have had a completely natural explanation, then that is the uncanny. On the other hand, if we must accept a supernatural explanation, then that is a marvelous story. The true fantastic is only achieved when the reader is unable to decide how the event is to be interpreted. However, these rules are somewhat flexible, because Todorov allows for narrative which contains a mixture of the uncanny or marvelous with what he defines as the pure fantastic.

The main difficulty with this form of definition is that it evades the question of what the reader accepts as a natural or supernatural event. Eric Rabkin says of this deficiency in Todorov's theory "... this hesitation should be seen not in relation to external norms, but rather in relation to microcontextual variations ..."[35] In other words Rabkin believes that it is not what the reader may or may not accept as "real," but the perspective imposed by the characters and narrator within the story. Otherwise, we must accept the fact that the genre of the fantastic is totally dependent upon the level of sophistication of the reader

[35] The Fantastic in Literature, note p. 118.

and his world view.

Keeping this in mind, let us continue with Todorov's placement of narrative forms which follow the Rosicrucian pattern. As we have already noted, this was a period in which the public's imagination was struggling to keep up with the marvels discovered in the New World. We may compare this with the modern world in which some science-fiction tales are so close to the possible as to invite confusion in the readership. The panic inspired by the radio presentation of H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds is an example of how fiction may impose itself on the consciousness of the receptive audience. We may compare this with the furor that arose upon the publication of the Rosicrucian stories. Although the reader may accept some of the occurrences in the stories as possible, he will still be bewildered by them. Therefore this places the Rosicrucian tales, as seen from the viewpoint of Todorov's definitions, within the category of the marvelous. According to him, the marvelous can be subdivided into various divisions with regard to its characteristics. The first of these is the hyperbolic marvelous which bases its break from the "real" world upon exaggeration. That is, what would be normal becomes marvelous because of its overblown dimensions.[36]

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[36] Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique, p. 60.

The next category is the exotic marvelous. In this case the break with the "real" world is based upon the fact that the reader does not know of the area being described. In this category are the tales of wondrous travels. Todorov comes close to recognizing the problem of the changing notions of reality when he states that the mixture of the marvelous with the natural in this sort of story exists only for the modern reader who has a more complete knowledge of the marvels described.

The last category of the marvelous for Todorov is the instrumental marvelous. [37] This form is based upon the wonders of technology and is linked with science-fiction. Our next chapter will deal in detail with the relationship of the Rosicrucian texts to the genre of science fiction .

From our description of the occurrences in the Rosicrucian tales, we see that they are composed primarily of the exotic and the instrumental marvelous. They describe the travels of Christian Rosencreutz and the wonders he sees in the (at that time) far off lands of the Middle East. Combined with this is the great expertise in alchemy and other sciences that he acquires in the land of the Arabs. In the Chymische Hochzeit he is introduced to many technical wonders during the creation of the new king and queen.

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[37] Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique, 61.

From this placement of the Rosicrucian tales among the marvelous in Todorov's scheme of the fantastic, let us proceed to Rosemary Jackson's more flexible definition of what elements constitute "fantastic literature." Her theory places more emphasis upon the social situation giving rise to "fantastic literature" than that of Todorov. The following quotation demonstrates the degree to which her conception of "fantastic literature" is dependent upon social context:

> Like any other text, a literary fantasy is produced within and determined by, its social context. Though it might struggle against the limits of this context, often being articulated upon that very struggle it cannot be understood in isolation from it.[38]

As a logical result of this historical determination, Jackson believes that the literature of the fantastic has gone through numerous transformations according to the time and place of its creation. Jackson believes that the fantastic is a branch of literature seeking to exceed the cultural constraints of the society of its origin. In other words, the fantastic expresses the unconscious desires of its native society. For this reason she does not believe that there is any "ideal theoretical model":

> This is not to imply that an ideal theoretical

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[38]Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, London and New York: Methuen, 1981, p.3.

> model exists to which all fantasies should conform. There is no abstract entity called 'fantasy'; there is only a range of different works which have similar structural characteristics and which seem to be generated by similar unconscious desires.[39]

This common desire is expressed when the fantasy violates what is considered possible. It transforms the impossible into the possible. She believes that this trans formation in effect disturbs the rules of artistic representation.[40]

Jackson mentions Sartre's definition of the fantasy, which states that while religious faith prevailed, fantasy told of "leaps into other realms." At this time fantasy performed a definite escapist function. In contrast, he considered the role of the fantasy in the modern, secular world to be the conversion of the familiar, everyday world into something strange.

This picture of the role of the fantastic in society is more congenial to the acceptance of the Rosicrucian alchemical tales within the genre of the fantastic. As we have already stated, the fantastic element in the Rosicrucian tale becomes difficult to judge, in Todorov's sense of the term, for the simple reason that we cannot know with any

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[39] Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, p. 8.

[40] Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, p. 14.

degree of certainty what the audience of the time would accept as natural and what it would consider beyond the possible. In this sense it would seem that the writer(s) of the Rosicrucian alchemical tales were stretching the boundaries of the concepts of possibility of their day. Since they speak of things that border upon the marvelous they stretch the imagination of an audience willing to believe. We may again return to a modern comparison to illustrate the point in question. The initiation books of Carlos Castañeda[41], although in a certain sense obviously fiction, have led many readers to search for the wonders and people described in them. Mankind has always had a desire to have knowledge revealed to it by **almost** believable characters. Andreae refers to this desire in a negative fashion when he mentions the Chymische Hochzeit in his autobiography. He calls it the "unnützen Bemühungen der Neugierigen."[42]

Another element worthy of mention is the religious framework in which the Rosicrucian texts were created. The audience was supposed to realize that the author(s) were "orthodox" Lutheran Christians and that they believed they

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[41]Carlos Castañeda wrote a series of books begining in 1968 which told of his dealings with a Yaqui Indian shaman called Don Juan. Some of the titles are: The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (1973); The Power of Silence: Further Lessons of Don Juan (1987).

[42]Selbstbiographie, p. 16.

could accomplish nothing without divine guidance. This would indicate in the Sartre-Jackson framework that these works should be considered to be essentially escapist. That is, they were meant to describe a world which is better than the "real," rather than to modify the perspective in order to make the everyday world appear strange. Thus in Jackson's opinion the Rosicrucian tales should tend towards the marvelous rather than the uncanny. She says "... the results are religious fantasies of angels, devils, heavens, hells, promised lands, and pagan fantasies of elves, dwarves, fairies, fairyland or 'faery'."[43] When we compare this statement to the kind of picture of the world that is presented in the Rosicrucian tales, we must again opt for the borderline. Fantastic creatures do appear, and the castle of the Chymische Hochzeit is certainly a marvelous place, but there is also a strong sense of the real world imparted by these tales. The marvelous is of the technical and exotic sort, rather than outright religious fantasy.

One more textual element commonly associated with "fantastic literature" emphasized in the Rosicrucian tales is the dream state. Especially in the Chymische Hochzeit the dream is a strong component of the structure of the narrative. This gives the narrator a different perspective on the

[43] Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, pp.23-4.

events that occur in the course of the story. Thus the distortion of the real world which Jackson calls for in the secular fantasy is again partially fulfilled.

Another principle of Jackson's separation between the fantasy that springs from a religious society as opposed to one derived from a secular background is the responsibility for the action.

> In religious fantasies and in pagan ones, this context of supernaturalism/magic locates good and evil outside the merely human, in a different dimension. It is a displacement of human responsibility on to the level of destiny: human action is seen as operating under the controlling influence of Providence, whether for good or for evil.[44]

In the Rosicrucian stories aid is given at times by those who seem more than humanly wise. In this sense, good is derived from an external force; however, for the main part, human action is emphasized and the evil as well as much of the good is the result of the efforts of human beings. Half of the way to the secular fantasy has been covered. Divine and demonic intervention are still present but not to the extent found, for example, in a medieval tale.

The Chymische Hochzeit is worthy of more intense scrutiny as an example of "fantastic literature," because it is

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[44] Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, p.53.

closer to the modern forms of literature which Todorov, Rabkin and Jackson recognize as "fantastic." For this reason we will devote the remainder of this chapter to a closer look at the Chymische Hochzeit.

The first element of the Chymische Hochzeit which distinguishes the text from the average marvelous tale, as defined by Todorov, is the first person narrator. In this it differs from the other two primary Rosicrucian works. The Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis are both narrated in a rather impersonal first person plural. They tell of the history of C.R.C. and the Rosicrucian movement which he is purported to have founded but do not speak as if they were personally involved in the events related. Although in the Chymische Hochzeit the narrator mentions that he is a brother of the Rosy-Cross: "Ich wer der Bruder von dem Rohten Rosen Creutz...,"[45] there is no other overt mention of the Rosicrucian society or of any other members of the brotherhood. Unlike the first two texts, the Chymische Hochzeit does not deal with either the foundation nor the procedures of the brotherhood. Other orders (Golden Fleece and Golden Stone) are mentioned later in the story, but as Rosencreutz uses the information that he is a brother of the Rosy-cross to enter the palace, it is impossible

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[45]Chymische Hochzeit, p. 56.

within the logic of the story for these other orders to be referential to the Rosicrucian brotherhood. That is, since Christian Rosencreutz has confessed that he is already a member of the Rosicrucians at the beginning of the tale, he cannot be awarded membership in this fraternity later on in the narrative. The Orders of the Golden Fleece and Golden Stone must have some further significance. In fact, as Will-Eric Peuckert mentions in his study of the Rosicrucian movement, in the context of the three original Rosicrucian tales, the name Christian Rosencreutz only appears in the Chymische Hochzeit.[46] Differences of structure and content such as the above have led Peuckert and others to believe that the Chymische Hochzeit is a totally new development in the Rosicrucian tales.

From the perspective of a fantasy this story is different from its predecessors in many respects. The sense of identification we feel with the protagonist Christian Rosencreutz is much greater than the kind of interest in the events in the life of C.R. developed in the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis. This is the kind of involvement we find in Todorov's criteria for the development of a "true" fantasy.

As we have mentioned earlier, another interesting point

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[46]Das Rosenkreutz, pp. 46-7.

in the development of the narration of the Chymische Hochzeit through its first person narrator is the heavy reliance upon dreams. As Christian Rosencreutz wonders how he should deal with the disturbing invitation delivered by an angelic figure in the first part of the novel, he says:

> Griff ich entlich nach meinem gewönlichen und aller sichersten weg, legte mich nach vollendtem ernstlichem und eifferigem Gebett in mein Bett: Ob mir doch mein guter Engel auß Göttlicher verhengnuß möcht erscheinen, in diesem zweifelichem handel, wie vormals etlichmal beschehen, berichten, welches dann auch Gott zu Lob mir zum besten und meinem Nechsten zu trewlicher und hertzlicher warnung und besserung geschehen.[47]

Christian Rosencreutz's piety is rewarded and he dreams that he is lying in chains in a great dungeon. The dreamer is allowed escape from this prison, where each inmate struggles against the other, by means of a rope let down by the servants of a beneficent woman, but he is held back from total success within the context of the dream due to injuries he has suffered while still a prisoner. This dream prefigures the subsequent course of the novel. That is, Christian Rosencreutz is relegated to the role of doorkeeper at the end of the Chymische Hochzeit because of his transgressions with "Frau Venus."

That the narrator hopes here for divine inspiration

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[47]Chymische Hochzeit, p. 47.

from a dream is completely consistent with Rosemary Jackson's observation that in the religious fantasy good and evil are placed outside the individual. However, in keeping with our awareness of the cultural context of the writer and audience of the Rosicrucian text, we may also note that this belief is not outside the framework of Andreae's normal, nonfictional reality. In his autobiography he tells of a dream in which he tore off a piece of a low flying cloud:

> Denn in Schlafe--um sogar einen Traum zu erzählen--sahe ich einst, wie eine pechschwarze Wolke sich tief herab senkte, und hart an meinem Fenster vorbei streifte. Ich öffnete das eine derselben, und riß ein Stücke ab, das so kalt war, daß ich darüber erwachte. Der Erfolg zeigte sich bald.[48]

He considers this dream to be directly related to his expulsion from the University of Tübingen. The marvelous element is therefore absent from this device as appears in the Chymische Hochzeit, because portentous dreams are part of the normal belief in Andreae's time. It is also unlike the dream states which are present in more modern works of the fantastic like Nerval's Aurélia in that the dream mode in the Chymische Hochzeit is clearly separated from the waking. That is, although the dream prefigures the events that are to occur later in the novel, there is no attempt to equate the dream state with reality. In the Rosicrucian

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[48]Selbstbiographie, p.16.

tales dreams are not included with surrealist or psychological intent, they are a "natural" way in which the supernatural world communicates with everyday reality.

We must also reject Todorov's definition of the dream as an allegory because it prefigures events in the story that are to come. Although it has some significance outside of the framework of the tale, the main point of the dream of the captives is to encourage Christian Rosencreutz to attempt to attend the wedding. Andreae obviously considered this dream to be a warning of the misfortune to come. This attitude of acceptance of dreams as a relatively straightforward message from another world to the here and now is quite orthodox for the day. In the Chymische Hochzeit this attitude towards the significance of dreams is maintained.[49]

The next dream Christian Rosencreutz has is a parable of the world with the competition of the chained prisoners representing the struggle of each man against his fellows.

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[49]The prehistoric view of dreams is no doubt echoed in the attitude adopted towards dreams by the peoples of classical antiquity. They took it as axiomatic that dreams were connected with the world of superhuman beings in whom they believed and that they were revelations from the gods and daemons. There could be no question, moreover, that for the dreamer, dreams had an important purpose, which was as a rule, to foretell the future.Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans J. Strachey (New York: Avon, 1965), p.36.

Christian Rosencreutz in the dream is able to escape the prison with the help of a woman from the outside but sustains wounds on his head and feet.

> Darauff sich dann das Trommeten abermal erhoben, welches mich dermassen erschreckt, daß ich erwacht und erst gemerckt, das es nuhr ein Traum gewesen, welcher mir doch so starck im Sinn gelegen, das ich mich noch immer vor dem Traum besorget, so däucht mich auch, wie ich noch der Wunden an Füssen empfünde. Wie nun dem allen, so verstund ich doch wol, das mir von Gott vergünnet worden were, solcher heimlichen und verborgenen Hochzeit beyzuwohnen ...[50]

That this dream is an allegory is obvious, however it also serves other functions in the novel. It is Rosencreutz's guide to his future action and it illustrates some of the trials he must go through in order to take part in the wedding to come.

The humility of the narrator in presenting his story in the Chymische Hochzeit helps the reader to maintain a sympathetic attitude towards him. The protagonist chooses to withdraw from the competitive judging of the guests on their first day in the castle. Christian Rosencreutz is content to remain bound overnight because he is promised that he will be released unharmed. During his night of captivity Rosencreutz is again blessed with a dream which tells him of the events to follow. It is interesting to note that this dream

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[50]Chymische Hochzeit, p.51.

is almost an exact inversion of the previous one. Instead of being kept underground and then released by means of a rope, the protagonist is suspended in the air and let down comparatively gently. Two mirrored perspectives of man's position in the world are included along with a device that serves to emphasize the course of the story. The hard climb up and the hard fall down represent the upper and lower limits of the world that Andreae is presenting. The fall of those who have been favored by fortune is matched by the struggle upward of the downtrodden. These dreams serve to delimit Andreae's society and therefore they satisfy Jackson's prerequisite for the fantastic that it demonstrate the boundaries of the society from which it springs.

Another occurrence of the dream indicating the borders of the society which produced the Chymische Hochzeit is related at the end of the third day of Christian Rosencreutz's stay in the castle:

> Noch ließ mir ein schändlicher Traum nit zu leib werden. Dann die gantze Nacht gieng ich mit einer Thüren umb, die kundt ich nit auffbringen, entlich gereth es mir. Mit solchen Fantaseyen vertrieb ich die Zeit, biß Ich entlich gegen Tag erwachet.[51]

Montgomery's interpretation of this dream is that it refers to the incident later in the Chymische Hochzeit in which Christian Rosencreutz sees the forbidden body of

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[51] Chymische Hochzeit, p.84.

Venus.[52] In fact, the term "schändlich" indicates that it refers to something quite shameful. This linking with the incident in the chamber of Venus is a clear example of the transgressive function of this fantasy. It is this incident that in the end brings about the downfall of Christian Rosencreutz. The relationship to sexual transgression is obvious. When one places the first draft of this novel shortly before Andreae's expulsion from the University of Tübingen, then this element of transgression of social bounds becomes even more prominent. There is, of course, also the possibility that Andreae added this incident after the fact, shortly before the publication of the novel many years later, but nevertheless it indicates the violation of a social norm and the subsequent punishment.

At this point we should mention that the incorporation of sexuality into a work of literature is considered by some to be consistent with the standards of "fantastic literature:"

> Its treatment of sexuality--whether sublimated, overt or even pornographic--is a distinctive characteristic of "fantastic literature." From the enchantments of Circe and Calypso in the Odyssey or Scheherazade's enchanting tales in The Arabian Nights Entertainments, through the desire of Frankenstein's Monster for a mate or the metaphorical rape that is Dracula's "kiss," to the

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52 Montgomery, vol. 2, p. 385.

> most fantastic passages of certain twentieth-century masterpieces...the erotic has always been an important aspect of the fantastic. Although there are surely many ways to account for this confluence of sexuality and fantasy, one basic connection worth investigating is the relationship that exists between sexuality and a primary source of fantasy's psychological appeal--its symbolic easing of humanities' fears of the unknown, particularly of its fear of death--in the most seminal, long enduring, and artistically satisfying fantasy works.[53]

In the context of the Chymische Hochzeit sexuality is seen as a dangerous force. It does not attempt to relieve the fears of the audience concerning this forbidden topic, instead, the implied sexuality of the viewing of Venus is intended to warn against possible disaster. However, the transgressive nature of sexuality is brought out into the open in this incident and therefore aids in the social function of "fantastic literature" as it is delineated by Jackson.

Let us now look at some of the marvels that occur in the Chymische Hochzeit in order to ascertain their significance in relation to the fantastic. The first thing that strikes the reader as being outside the normal framework of reality, no matter what the period of its creation, is the appearance of the angelic messenger. This messenger is pre-

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[53]Donald Palumbo, "Sexuality and the Allure in Fantastic Literature" in Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature ed. Donald Palumbo, New York: Greenwood, 1986, p. 3.

sented in an almost humorous manner. As Christian Rosencreutz sits at home and contemplates the wonders God has revealed to him, there comes a great wind and he is tapped upon the shoulder by a female figure with a sack of letters. Somehow the reader's sympathy with Christian Rosencreutz is increased by his surprise. "... darvon ich ich dermassen erschrocken, das ich mich kaum umbsehen dörffen ..."[54] later, when the angel-like figure blows her trumpet upon departure and Christian Rosencreutz is half deafened, our sympathy is increased. This scene with its almost slapstick humor at the very beginning of the novel is perhaps grounds for accepting Andreae's statement that the Chymische Hochzeit was a joke blown out of proportion by an over eager audience. There is, of course, no reason to believe that a fantastic tale cannot be at the same time humorous. Rabkin bases a good deal of his presentation of the fantastic upon Lewis Carrol's very funny works.

The next major occurrence of the marvelous in the Chymische Hochzeit is the tonsure by invisible barbers.[55] Again we find that a less than serious tone is maintained as the pages laugh at his fear. This wonder is definitely not of the religious sort. In fact, Christian Rosencreutz says

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[54] Chymische Hochzeit, p.45.

[55] Chymische Hochzeit, p. 58.

that although he could not see the barbers, he knew them to be men. Therefore it would seem that this falls within Todorov's definition of the technically marvelous. As for the transgressive function Jackson speaks of, we find little of it here. There is nothing intrinsically disturbing about receiving a tonsure from invisible barbers. That is, the idea of a tonsure is not horrifying in the same way that a murder or the loss of home and family would be. It does, however, disturb the normal world view in that the apparently impossible is said to have occurred. This is more radical than attributing it to divine or demonic beings. Because Christian Rosencreutz insists that these are humans, who can become invisible, he changes the reader's normal perception of his fellow man. The theme of invisible servants is continued throughout the tale and the narrator mentions that some of the unruly guests at the first banquet claim that they can see these mysterious waiters. These are the same sort of people who claim to have the secret of perpetual motion or have intimate knowledge of the Platonic Ideals. Christian Rosencreutz is amused when one of the invisible servants strikes a man who claims he can see them.

> Daß aber gefiel mir am besten, daß alle die Jenige, auff die ich etwas gehalten, in ihren thun fein still waren und nicht laut darzu schrien, sondern erkandten sich für unverstendige Menschen,

> denen der Natur geheimnuß zu hoch, sie aber viel zu gering weren.[56]

The indication is that these mysteries are not supernatural, but rather the product of nature. Therefore, the laws of nature are not being broken in this instance, they are expanded, and the wise observer will admit to his ignorance and, perhaps, try to learn.

Another instance of this approach to the natural causes of the apparently supernatural events is demonstrated near the end of the story. Christian Rosencreutz shows insight into affairs that mystify his associates. As the culmination of the process which creates new bodies for the king and queen, the souls must be infused into the lifeless homunculi. The narrator says of the old man who leads the final part of the process as he places torches around the inert forms:

> Hie muß ich den Leser warnen, daß er diese Liechter nit für notwendig achte, dann es war deß Alten Intent allein dahin, daß wir nit mercken solten, wann die Seel in sie [the homunculi] fuhre, wie wirs dann auch nit gemerckt hetten, wa ich die Flammen [disembodied souls] nit zuvor zweymalen gesehen hätte, doch ließ ich die andere Drey auff dem Glauben bleiben, so wuste der Alte nit, daß ich mehrers gesehen.[57]

This approach to wonderful occurrences is closely

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[56] Chymische Hochzeit, p.60.

[57] Chymische Hochzeit, pp.114-5.

related to the technically marvelous as Todorov defines it. Like science fiction the rules of the universe are purported to be consistent, but not exactly as the audience knows them. The ever expanding knowledge of seventeenth century man leads to fantasy which exploits the desire to gain more and more knowledge. The satire upon those who claim to have more knowledge than they actually do is also obvious. This element of satire has led to much confusion about the true nature of the Chymische Hochzeit.

> "Fest steht nur das die Chymische Hochzeit von dem württembergischen Theologen Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1684) stammt. Ob es ihm darauf ankam, einen alchemistischen Prozeß in allegorischer Einkleidung zu schreiben, oder ob das ganze vielleicht als Parodie der bereits bestehenden Sekte auffaßte, wissen wir nicht.[58]

This basic difficulty with the interpretation of events within the framework of the story leads to much confusion as to the nature of the fantastic elements contained within it. From our arguments to this point it has hopefully become apparent that the view of the Chymische Hochzeit as a simple allegory of a complex chemical process is to be rejected. Montgomery's claim that it is a religious allegory of some sort which criticizes the Rosicrucian movement is more plausible, although it implies some depth of theological commitment that the young Andreae's biography does not con-

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[58] Alchemie, pp. 191-2.

firm. As we have seen from the statements by Rabkin and Rosemary Jackson neither the parody nor the religious allegory may be excluded from the ranks of the fantastic. Of course we must also admit that under Todorov's rigid definitions the Fama Fraternitatis Confessio Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit cannot be considered examples of the "true" fantastic. Nor do the Rosicrucian texts fit Rabkin's concept of "Fantasy" as a genre devoted purely to fantastic elements of construction. Nonetheless it is hoped that this chapter has given the reader some insight into the structure as well as the audience appeal of the Rosicrucian texts. The continuing and variegated interest in these three texts provides the scholarly reader with much to ponder.

After this discussion of the relationship of the Rosicrucian texts to "fantastic literature" we intend to compare Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit with the modern genre of science fiction.

Science Fiction

One of the most important elements the author(s) of the Rosicrucian texts incorporated into their work is that of the contemporary science (or pseudo-science) of alchemy. There seems to be at work in the **channel of cross-reference** a process which roughly parallels that of the modern tendency to incorporate science and scientific postulation in television, film, and popular literature.[1] The scientific revolution begun in the Renaissance had, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, become so much an integral part of day to day life that the average man had begun to expect wonders of science and technology. Copernicus had revolutionized the study of the heavens through his disruption of the geocentric model of the universe. Alchemy, with its roots in the mysterious Orient, held out promise not only for enormous economic gain but also for both physical and spiritual health. In the sixteenth century, Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim(1493-1541), a Swiss physician and alchemist who wrote and worked under the latinized appellation of Philippus Aureolus

[1]The channel of cross reference is a mechanism described in the second chapter of this dissertation. It is the process by which readers' reactions influence the creations of subsequent creations of a literary series.

Paracelcus had revolutionized medical science with his introduction of medicines based upon the use of chemicals. His influence continued into the next century. John Warwick Montgomery says "...the greatest flowering of Christian alchemy coincided with the German Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."[2] The father of the Reformation himself, Martin Luther, was interested in alchemy and used metaphors from the discipline in his sermons.

> Luther in his characteristic fashion praises alchemy for both its practical usefulness per se and for its ability to witness the basic Christian truth; as we shall see, these dual emphases run through all of the Lutheran alchemy of the period. The Reformer's positive attitude towards the hermetic art is also attested, though indirectly, by the vocation of his son Paul. Paul Luther, we learn from the primary-source funeral oration delivered for him by Matthias Dresser in 1593, was a court physician who employed aurum potabile in his practice. Thus Luther's son was certainly well acquainted with the iatrochemical tradition so greatly influenced by Paracelcus.[3]

In such a climate of interest in alchemy it is not surprising that the author(s) of the Rosicrucian works used elements of alchemy more and more in subsequent publications of the series. The interaction between the readers of the Rosicrucian texts and the practitioners of

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[2]Cross and Crucible, p.14.

[3]Cross and Crucible, pp. 15-16.

alchemical "science" may be usefully compared to the dialectic relationship between modern scientists and writers of science fiction. For this reason it may be useful to discuss the way in which the Rosicrucian texts follow the structure of modern science fiction.

As in the study of any other form of literature, there is no general consensus as to how the genre should be defined. Nevertheless, it is my intention to present some of the more appropriate theoretical statements on the subject as they may be applied to the Rosicrucian texts. The purpose of this chapter is not to prove that the Rosicrucian texts would be acceptable to all theories as science fiction. However, I hope to prove that these texts bear an evolutionary relationship to modern science fiction much as the primitive primates are considered to be ancestors of man.

Tzvetan Todorov, in his The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, seeks to place science fiction in an area of literature which he designates as scientific marvelous or instrumental marvelous:

> Assez proche de ce premier type de merveilleux est le merveilleux exotique. On rapporte ici des événements surnaturels sans les présenter comme tels; le récepteur implicite de ces contes est censé ne pas connaître les régions où se déroulent les événements; par conséquent il n'a pas de

> raisons de les mettre en doute.
> Un troisième type de merveilleux pourrait être appelé le merveilleux instrumental. Apparaissent ici des petits gadgets, des perfectionnements techniques irréalisables à l'époque décrite, mais après tout parfaitement possibles.[4]

Todorov indicates that the difference between the instrumental marvelous and science fiction is the rational explanation of the material provided in the latter. The Rosicrucian tales, when considered as a unit, are a prime example of the kind of stories which attribute wonders to human ingenuity. Of course, as in much of the literature of the time, there is a constant reiteration of the theme of divine guidance, which is intended to provide a balance to the element of human achievement. In fact, Montgomery puts forth a persuasive argument that the basis of the Rosicrucian stories or at least of the Chymische Hochzeit is religious allegory. However, it is, I believe, a simplistic form of analysis which seeks to designate the complex myth of the Rosicrucians as simply an allegory. If the interactive development of the Rosicrucian tales is ignored then perhaps it may be argued that the Chymische Hochzeit is allegorical. However, if we see the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis as statements in a dialogue between author and audience, then the Chymische Hochzeit is

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[4] Introduction à la littérature fantastique, p.60

a logical culmination of the expressed desire for more precise explication of the alchemical elements which were merely hinted at in the first two stories. Not only is the alchemy discussed at length, the main character in this story, Christian Rosencreutz, is developed from a peripatetic set of initials (brother C.R.) to a full blown human being with feelings, failures and foibles. This increase in the depth of representation of both Christian Rosencreutz and the alchemy of the Rosicrucians fills out the sketchy outline of the first two works.

Todorov also states that the best science fiction is organized analogously.

> Les données initiales sont surnaturelles: les robots, les êtres extra-terrestres, le cadre interplanétaire. Le mouvement du récit consiste à nous obliger à voir combien ces éléments en apparence merveilleux nous sont en fait proches, jusqu'à quel point ils sont présents dans notre vie. Une nouvelle de Robert Scheckley commence par l'opération extraordinaire qui consiste à greffer un corps d'animal sur un cerveau humain; elle nous montre à la fin tout ce que l'homme le plus normal a en commun avec l'animal (le Corps). Une autre débute par la description d'une invraisemblable organisation qui vous délivre de l'existence des personnes indésirables; quand le récit s'achève, on se rend compte qu'une telle idée est familière à tout être humain (Service de débarras). C'est le lecteur qui subit ici le processus d'adaptation: mis d'abord en face d'un fait surnaturel, il finit par en reconnaître la "naturalité".[5]

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[5]Introduction à la littérature fantastique, pp. 180-81.

The Rosicrucian tales do not follow the pattern of what Todorov considers to be the "best." They do, however, seek to convince the reader that the "supernatural" is in fact natural and that it not only exists in the world of its readers, but also has **existed** for some time. That is, there is a society of practicing alchemists which has existed in Europe for over a century. From Todorov's description of what he considers significant in science fiction, we may conclude that he believes the genre serves the function of providing an alienated view of the everyday world.[6] The Rosicrucian application of the supernatural does not seem to serve this function exactly. Because it seeks to present to society the possibility of a depth of the "real" world of which the general public had no knowledge, the sequence of Rosicrucian tales is directed towards possibility. That is to say, the Rosicrucian tales open the minds of the readers to what **may be** rather than what is. It is not surprising therefore that these works of fiction led to the creation of actual Rosicrucian societies. We may conclude that the author(s) had intuitively grasped the proper means for developing a more than literary interest in their reading public.

Another theoretician of science fiction provides us

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[6] Introduction à la littérature fantastique, p. 173

with a definition which highlights other aspects of the Rosicrucian texts. Kingsley Amis defines science fiction as:

> ...that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world that we know, but which is hypothesized on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin ...[7]

Although Amis agrees with Todorov about the introduction of the marvelous as the means by which science fiction is characterized, he does not ascribe to Todorov's opinion that science fiction is directed towards the development of an analogy. Actually, in this statement, Amis indicates that science fiction demonstrates a tendency toward the creation of a fiction which is consistent with certain criteria selected by the author. Unlike the standard conception of verisimilitude which asks the writer to conform to the commonly conceived notion of the real world, the science fiction audience expects that the writer be consistent within that framework of science or <u>pseudo science</u> which he has selected. In this respect, the channel of cross reference becomes even more important to the science fiction writer than to the creators of mainstream fiction. The science fiction audience demands that the internal consistency of

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[7]Kingsley Amis, <u>New Maps of Hell</u>, London: Victor Gollancz, p.18, 1962.

the tale be made so firm as to lead the reader to accept the work as "real." Unlike Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief," the science fiction fan wishes to accept his world as a possible one--one that he may accept as logical within the framework of the rules established by the author. "...while science fiction...maintains a respect for fact or presumptive fact, fantasy makes a point of flouting these..."[8] I do not claim that this holds true for all works described as science fiction, nor do I believe that it is the only category of valid science fiction text in existence. However, this tendency is certainly manifest in many of the best examples of the genre. In this section I will be expanding upon this tendency in science fiction as well as demonstrating how the channel of cross-reference is necessary to the development of this form. Because science fiction is so dependent upon the audience's knowledge of the logical framework of a given novel, the genre is characterized by series of novels which have the same setting and often combine fictional histories and/or maps of countries, planets, etc. The reader seems to delight in searching the work of art for elements of internal inconsistency and reporting these to the author for correction/explanation in subsequent publications. An example of this is the concern

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[8]New Maps of Hell, p.22.

expressed by certain fans of Larry Nivin's Ringworld novels. These novels deal with an artificial construction intended to replace a planet as a dwelling place for intelligent beings. Rather than being a sphere orbiting a sun, the Ringworld is a ribbon-like structure spinning around a central sun.

> Ringworld is ten years old; and I have never stopped getting letters about it. People have been commenting on the assumptions, overt and hidden, and the mathematics and the ecology and the philosophical implications, precisely as if the Ringworld were a proposed engineering project and they were being paid for the work. ...MIT students were chanting in hotel hallways: THE RINGWORLD IS UNSTABLE![9]

The similarity to the attention paid to the Rosicrucian society over the course of the publication of the three texts is obvious. Yates comments upon this phenomenon:

> These announcements aroused at the time a frenzied interest and many were the passionate attempts to reach the R.C. Brothers by letters, printed appeals, and pamphlets. A river of printed works takes its rise from these manifestos, responding to their invitation to get in touch with the writers and co-operate in the work of the Order.[10]

The essence of this comparison is the scientific

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[9]Niven, Larry, The Ringworld Engineers Toronto: Ballantine, 1980, p.vii.

[10] The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, p. 49.

scenario. What can be modeled in imagination may some day become real. The science fiction fan like the follower of the Rosicrucian texts is a product of the open ended attitudes of the post-Renaissance world. What can be conceived can be built. As pointed out in the previous section of our discussion, the Rosicrucian texts are not quite the same as modern science fiction. This principle also holds true in respect to what we may label scientific vraisemblance. Since the first two Rosicrucian texts did not go into great depth regarding the details of the scientific (i.e. alchemical) advances of the Rosicrucian society the reader response focused upon two main points. The first was doubt as to the actual existence of the brotherhood. "...wie denn daher von vielen gezweiffelt worde / ob die obgedachte Fraternitet warhafftig oder Figürlich zuverstehen..."[11] The second point raised by the letters to the Rosicrucians was to find out more about the society; in fact, to join them. "So verberget euch nich länger...die verwirrete Welt zu lehren den wahren Weg der ewigen Philosophy...[12]

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[11]I.B.P. Medicus "Sendschreiben an die Brüderschaffe deßlöblichen Ordens deß R.C." in Famma Fraternitatis deß löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes Danzig: Andrea(m) Hünefeld 1615, p.112.

[12]Adam Haselmeyer, "Antwort and die Lobwürdige Brüderschafft der Theosophen vom RosenCreutz," in Famma Fraternitatis deß löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes, Danzig: Andrea(m) Hünefeld 1615, p.87- 88.

The second element is most important to our comparison in that it demonstrates the desire of the readers to become involved in the artificial construct of the author(s)' world. In Sherry Turkle's study of the effects that computers have had on modern society, The Second Self, we find that engineers and computer programmers are often avid fans of science fiction. The MIT students mentioned in the above quotation from Nivin were not students of literature. Turkle explains this interest in a certain branch of literature by people involved in what are generally considered to be "practical" disciplines in the following description of the similarity between computer programming and writing science fiction:

> As in the case of writing a program, the only imperative in writing science fiction is consistency. Once you write a microworld, in computer code or between the covers of a book, you have to obey its constraints. Hackers are drawn to making microworlds. . .
>
> Science fiction gets its complexity from the invention of worlds rather than the definition of character. While most everyday fiction takes everyday reality as its backdrop and develops interest in the complexity of its human characters, science fiction characters tend to be more one-dimensional.[13]

The significant difference between the creation of a consistent world as proposed by Turkle's analysis of science

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[13]Sherry Turkle, The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit New York: Simon and Shuster, 1984, p.222.

fiction and the Rosicrucian texts is that the seventeenth century author(s) seems to have intended that their creation be taken as the existing reality. The created world strives to impose itself upon the reader's conception of reality. The text of the Fama Fraternitatis gives no indication to the reader as to whether this is a literary fiction or if it is the report of an actual society. However, as the replies to the Fama Fraternitatis began to appear, the Confessio Fraternitatis was prepared. This continuation of the literary fiction sought, through reassurances of the true existence of a society as well as supplementary details of the life of its founder, to create a more consistent "microworld" which would, at the same time, be confused with the real world.

Although Turkle claims that science fiction is of particular interest to engineers and computer programmers, she does not mention that modern science fiction authors often possess an education in one or more of the sciences. (Isaac Asimov, Jerry Pournelle, Robert Heinlein etc.) Andreae, admitted author of the Chymische Hochzeit, also possessed scientific training remarkable for a man primarily remembered as a scholar and theologian. Montgomery says that Andreae acquired an interest in science and mathematics during his formative years at the University of

Tübingen.[14] Therefore it is not surprising that he chose to include the pseudo-science of alchemy in his work.

Although the similarities between science fiction and the Rosicrucian texts represented by the preceding discussion is convincing, there exists an undeniable tendency among those who write about science fiction to limit the genre to more recent times. For example, in their study of science fiction, Rabkin and Scholes seek to restrict this type of writing to the period following Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. However, as can be seen in the following quotation, the rapidly changing world of the early seventeenth century may also fit the prescribed situation for the creation of science fiction:

> ...science fiction could begin to exist as a literary form only when a different future became conceivable by human beings--specifically a future in which new knowledge, new discoveries, new adventures, new mutations, would make life radically different from the familiar patterns of the past and present.[15]

The flexibility and change that was apparent in the period before the Thirty Years War in Germany also gave rise to a mood of hope and a desire for new ways of life founded

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[14]The Cross and Crucible, p. 34.

[15]Eric S. Rabkin and Robert Scholes, Science Fiction: History Science Vision, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.7.

upon discoveries in science, geography as well as a different approach to religion. This is not to restrict the Rosicrucian phenomenon to Germany. England and France both were receptive to the kinds of thought which encouraged the acceptance of the Rosicrucians as a real society.

In fact it is precisely this desire for change and flexibility which is recognized as significant in the Fama Fraternitatis by Michael Fisher in Die Aufklärung und ihr Gegenteil:

> Modern Gesprochen drückt die "Fama" damit aus, daß die bisherige Wissenschaft in einer Krise steckt, der bisherige Orientierungskomplex nicht geeignet ist, die Fülle der auftauchenden Probleme zu lösen. Dagegen fordert die "Fama" eine verstärkte Erforschung der Grundlagen von Mensch und Natur, Zusammenarbeit der Wissenschaftler und der Wissenschaftdiziplinen.[16]

This logical framework provides the essential unity of the Rosicrucian works; one might even say more so than the simple continuity of the character Christian Rosencreutz. For this reason, those who see the Rosicrucian stories as a simple religious allegory are doing its creator(s) an injustice. There is no denying that the Rosicrucian stories contain a strong element of religion and even, perhaps, some allegorical intent.[17] Nevertheless, as in science fic-

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[16]Michael Fischer, Die Aufklärung und ihr Gegenteil: die Rolle der Geheimbünde in Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin: Duncker und Humbolt, 1982, p. 44.

[17]It is also impossible to deny that there is often an element of religion present in modern science fiction. Amis

tion according to the definition of Rabkin and Scholes, the Rosicrucian tales seek to depict an alternative to the present view of the world. They do so by extrapolations upon existing science and notions concerning the world, that is, there is knowledge to be found in far off lands that could surpass the best of contemporary European science.

Darko Suvin, in contrast to Rabkin and Scholes, has a more liberal view of the chronological boundaries of science fiction. He does not believe that science fiction should be limited to the most recent period of literary history.

> Conversely, SF, which focuses upon the variable and future-bearing elements from the empirical environment, is found predominantly in the whirlpool periods of history, such as the sixteenth-seventeenth and nineteenth-twentieth centuries. Where myth claims to explain once and for all the essence of phenomena, SF first posits them as problems and then explores where they lead; it sees the mythical static identity as an illusion, usually as fraud, at best only a temporary realization of potentially limitless contingencies. It does not ask about The Man or The World, but which man?: in what kind of world?:and why such a man in such a kind of world? As a literary genre, SF is fully as opposed to supernatural or metaphysical estrangement as it is to naturalism or empiricism.[18]

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discusses this at some length in his chapter entitled "New Light on the Unconscious."(Amis pp. 82-86.)

[18]Suvin, Darko, Metamorphosis of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979),p. 7)

Suvin goes on to state his definition of science fiction as a genre which depends upon estrangement and cognition for its existence. He believes that the main formal device of science fiction is "an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment."[19] Thus we find that Suvin's definition of the genre comes closer to complete acceptance of the Rosicrucian texts than any we have dealt with so far. Like Todorov he believes that science fiction uses techniques of alienation to achieve its literary and didactic goals. There may be some question as to the metaphysical elements of the Rosicrucian texts but, as we shall see later in this study, these elements, although prominently placed, due to the turbulent religious climate of the day, do not form a significant part of the peculiar attraction of the Rosicrucian works. Suvin develops a theory which may account for many of the elements of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit within the boundaries of the genre of science fiction. Suvin contrasts science fiction with both fantasy and the folktale for reasons which are similar to one another. In the case of the folktale, the empirical

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19 Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, p.8

laws of the author's world are rejected in favor of a "closed collateral world indifferent to cognitive possibilities."[20] From the perspective of reader-author interaction, which we have selected for this study, the folktale chooses to ignore the empirical standard laws of reality which both parties may observe around them. Moreover, the folktale does not choose to provide an alternative which will allow the reader to easily override his standard means of interpreting reality. The folktale simply offers an alternate sort of reality which need not be seen in relation to everyday life.

The fantasy is, in Suvin's opinion, even further away from science fiction. It expects the reader to accept the mixture of "anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment".[21] (If we refer to Todorov's notion of the fantastic which forms the basis of his concept of the genre he labels "Fantasy," however, we may see that it is precisely this element of tension between the empirical and anti-empirical which provides the greatest reader appreciation).

Suvin believes that roots of modern science fiction may be found in the seventeenth century. It is not, however, to the alchemical tale that he directs his atten-

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20 Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, p.8

21 Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, pp. 8-9.

tion. He considers the Baroque pastoral as a true precursor of science fiction in that it attempts to isolate certain elements of human motivation:

> The pastoral, on the other hand, is essentially closer to SF. Its imaginary framework of a world without money-economy, state apparatus, and depersonalizing urbanization allows it to isolate, as in a laboratory, two human motivations: erotics and power-hunger. This approach relates to SF as alchemy does to chemistry and nuclear physics: an early try in the right direction with insufficient foundations.[22]

This statement gives us an indication of where we may place the Rosicrucian tales in Suvin's taxonomy of science fiction. Although these stories are not to be confused with pastorals, there is no doubt that they include many of the elements present in modern science fiction. The pastoral is much like Utopian fiction in that it represents a place in the world which is free from the problems of the rest of society. Despite the fact that Andreae did, later in his life, write a genuine utopia entitled Christianopolos, there is no mistaking any of the Rosicrucian tales for utopian science fiction. The Rosicrucian stories do not suggest in the least that Christian Rosencreutz gained his knowledge from a perfect society in the Middle East. In fact, much is made of the fact that the Muslim culture cannot, by defini-

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22 Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, p.8

tion, achieve perfection. Also, neither the Fama Fraternitatis nor the Confessio Fraternitatis suggest that the Rosicrucians live in an ideal society. Rather they are said to live "invisibly" among normal society. The closest to an ideal society that is represented in any of the tales is the society existing within the castle in the Chymische Hochzeit. However, unlike the accepted procedure in utopian fiction, the focus of the narrative in the Chymische Hochzeit is not upon the mechanics of the ideal society, but rather, upon the spiritual and intellectual development of Andreae's protagonist, Christian Rosencreutz.

Suvin further seeks to define science fiction by terming it estranged fiction. That is, fiction which, unlike most mainstream literature, seeks to depict man's relationships to other men and to their environment through the presentation of an alternative formal framework. In this, science fiction is like both fantasy and folktales. However, when physics (i.e. our common empirical frame of reference) is determined by human ethics, then Suvin terms that type of fiction as metaphysical. In other words, the happy end is pre-determined by a positive inclination of the world towards the hero of the work.[23] None of the Rosicrucian tales presents us with a world that is inclined

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[23] Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, pp. 18-9.

towards or against the success of its hero. In fact, at the end of the Chymische Hochzeit Christian Rosencreutz is unsure of his future and reduced to the position of gatekeeper. This is in contrast to the Märchen, which represents the physical world as inclined towards the success of the hero or the fantastic tale in which the world is inclined against the hero.

The Rosicrucian tales are in some ways on the borderline between estranged and naturalistic in that they represent a world intended to be mistaken for the "real" one by the reader. However, the elements of estrangement are represented by the existence of a secret society which has knowledge of a set of rules superior to those in the physical world. That is, the Confessio Fraternitatis seeks to develop an alternative world in which a society of practicing alchemists has existed for over 100 years. The device of the secret society which is only revealed many years after its inception is not unknown in works of fiction more commonly accepted as examples of science fiction. In the modern science fiction classic Methuselah's Children by Robert Heinlein, the author posits a group of incredibly long lived people who reveal their existence after years of concealment. Like the Fama Fraternitatis, Methuselah's Children[24] is part of a loose series of works which represent

[24]Robert A. Heinlein, "Methuselah's Children" in The

an attempt to define a future history. This series of works (now published under the title The Past Through Tomorrow) is described in the words of Damon Knight:

> It is a history, not of the future but of a future-- an alternate probability world...which is logically consistent, dramatic, and recognizably an offshoot of our own past. The stories do not really form a linear series at all--they are more like a pyramid in which the early stories provide a solid base for later ones to rest on.[25]

Rabkin and Scholes believe that Heinlein's attempt to form a coherent alternate history is a major innovation for science fiction writers of the twentieth century (Rabkin and Scholes pp 52-58). They remark upon the common opinion that the series is more of a patchwork than a totality which was conceived as a single work. Thus, Heinlein's "future history" may be considered as a structure somewhat similar to the Rosicrucian texts. The channel of cross-reference facilitated by the publication of these stories in the science fiction magazine Astounding Science Fiction allowed Heinlein's audience to influence the development of the work as a totality. The increased sale of the issues which published stories from the series as well as written comments

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Past Through Tomorrow, New York: Putnam 1967. pp.526-667.

[25]Damon Knight, Introduction to The Past Through Tomorrow, by Robert A. Heinlein, New York: Putnam 1967. p.10.

and praise sent to the editor of the magazine inspired the author to continue. In fact, the editor of Astounding Science Fiction, John W. Campbell, who responded vigorously to the economic advantages of publishing Heinlein's work is credited by most scholars who study the genre as having directed much of the development of American science fiction for several decades. The fact that the Rosicrucian tales were a similar remarkable success cannot be excluded as a factor in the eagerness of publishers all over Europe to present not only the three original texts but also the flood of subsequent publications on the topic.

Suvin's views of science fiction as a literature of progress seem remarkably well suited for application to the Rosicrucian stories. Earlier we noted that Suvin states that science fiction is notable for its rejection of static states as "illusion or fraud." This describes precisely the rejection of the static state of science, which is the responsibility of the European intellectual class as represented in the Fama Fraternitatis.

> Er [Christian Rosenkreuz] zeigte ihnen[the European intellectual community] newe Gewächs, newe Früchte, Thiere, die sich nicht nach die alten Philosophia richteten und gab ihnen newe axiomata für die Hand, so durchauß alles salvertien, aber es war ihnen alle lächerlich und weil es noch new, besorgeten sie, ihr grosser Nahme würde geschmälert...[26]

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[26] Fama Fraternitatis p. 19.

In the Fama Fraternitatis the notion that the world was ready for a great change at the time of Christian Rosenkreuz's return from the Middle East is continually re-emphasized. The author conforms to Suvin's conception of science fiction as a genre that demands re-evaluation of commonly held notions:

> ...die Welt schon damahls mit so grosser Commodion schwanger gangen und in der Geburt gearbeitet, auch sie so unverdrossene Helden herfür gebracht, die mit aller Gewalt durch die Finsternuß und Barbarien hin-durchgebrochen und uns schwächern nur nachzudruchen gelassen und freylich der Spitz Trignio igneo gewesen, dessen Flammen nunmehr je heller leuchtet und gewißlichen der Welt den letzten Brand antzünden wird.[27]

This desire for change through the alchemical technology as well as the insight into the ways of nature which Christian Rosencreutz brought back from his travels as expressed in the first of the Rosicrucian tales is combined with another element Suvin sees as characteristic of science fiction. Science fiction is related to naturalistic or non-estranged fiction on the level of the adventure-journey and Suvin traces this back as far as the legends of Ulysses.[28] It is remarkable how closely this progression of the devel-

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[27] Fama Fraternitatis p. 20.

[28] Metamorphosis of Science Fiction, p.22.

opment of science fiction parallels that of the three Rosicrucian stories. The first, the Fama Fraternitatis is essentially the story of brother C.R.'s journey to the Middle East and of his return with wondrous knowledge. Suvin sees the voyage as it appears in science fiction as serving the primary function of estrangement. In the case of the Rosicrucian tales, the journey to the Middle East serves not only as justification for estrangement but also, in the context of the expanding society of seventeenth century Europe, as a kind of explanation of the wonders described. Much as the modern science fiction writer explains inventions that do not conform to known science by deriving them from alien civilizations on other planets, the Rosicrucian author(s) used the terra incognita of the lands of the Arabs. A work in the style of fantasy or Märchen would not have attempted to explain the source of the knowledge. These other branches of the literature of estrangement would have merely encouraged the reader to accept the alternate rules of reality as a literary device.

It is reasonable to surmise that the Rosicrucian stories would never have captured the public imagination as they did, if they had conformed to the conventions of fantasy, allegory or the Märchen. Perhaps some of the confusion about the purpose of these texts is due to the way

in which their author(s) seem to have gone beyond the bounds of contemporary literary convention and moved towards a type of fiction closer to modern science fiction than any works published before.

From the preceding comparison of the Rosicrucian texts to science fiction one may conclude that there is, indeed, a relationship between the two. The discussion in this chapter has been restricted to the reception of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit as they were published in the early part of the seventeenth century. However, if we wish to explore the full ramifications of a type of literature which is heavily dependent upon a dialectic relationship with its audience, we cannot end our investigation at this point. For example, there is evidence to support the theory that the Fama Fraternitatis was in existence as a handwritten text being circulated among those interested in the topic before it ever appeared in print. Adam Haselmeyer says in a reply to the Rosicrucians which was published along with a print of the Confessio in 1615:

> Als uns nemblich Anno 1610. erstlich herin in diß Land Tyrol/ ewer Schreiben Fama Fraternitatis R.C. Schriftlich zukommen/ weilen wirs gedruckt noch nie bishero ansichtig mögen werden...[29]

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[29]Adam Haselmeyer, "Antwort and die Lobwürdige Brüderschafft der Theosophen vom RosenCreutz," in Famma Fraternitatis deß löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes, Danzig: Andrea(m) Hünefeld 1615, p.84.

Because of this theory there has been much speculation about the degree to which the Rosicrucian texts were modified before they appeared in print.[30] However, as these handwritten forms of the Fama Fraternitatis are unavailable it is useless to speculate upon the degree of influence the responses to that form might have had upon the printed version. The fact that the Fama Fraternitatis was in circulation before it was set in type leads one to believe that there was some interaction between audience and author of the same sort that we find in modern science fiction.

When the Rosicrucian texts finally appeared in print, it was not long before they crossed the English Channel and were translated into English. In this situation the diagram presented in our chapter on literary theories applicable to the Rosicrucian texts demonstrates certain deficiencies. The translator is interposed at the point of the channel of cross reference which communicates the reaction of the audience back to the author, and a whole new

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[30]Peuckert and Yates both present theories which indicate that the Rosicrucian stories were developments of earlier concepts. Their arguments although interesting provide little more than the circumstantial evidence of similarity among texts.

sequence of sender and coded text appears. This effect of reception of text affecting the creation of new translations is apparent in the way the Rosicrucian texts came to Britain. One of the chief advocates and translator of the Rosicrucian texts in England was Thomas Vaughan, brother of the famous metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan. His approach to the texts in translation as well as the commentaries that he appended to the translations which appeared in English were sure to influence subsequent readers of the texts. Vaughan's writings appeared in the 1650s, so it would be impossible to consider them as part of the channel of cross reference within the framework of the creation of the initial three texts. However, the material we have presented so far indicates this channel of communication between the writer and the audience is not necessarily limited by a single author. As indicated previously, there is no firm way of determining the authorship of the three Rosicrucian texts. The fictional worlds created by science fiction authors demand a degree of rigor that makes it easy for them to be taken up, either entirely or in part, by subsequent writers. In fact, the genre of science fiction is rife with convention, that is, standard fictional rules which allow the writer to build upon a logical framework created previously.[31] The

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[31]The theoretical and practical exigiencies of the creation of a literary framework which is, to some extent, self sustaining, will be dealt with in detail in our next

Rosicrucian texts have, therefore, a long tradition of further publications dealing with the concept of the Rosicrucian society. In subsequent sections of our study we will deal with the extension of the channel of cross reference across the boundaries of time. It will become apparent that for literature of the type represented by the Rosicrucian tales the creation of a fictional framework provides a means for development, by both an enthusiastic audience as well as creative writers, that can span more than one generation of readers. To do this I intend to go beyond the comparison with the literature of science fiction and deal also with writers in the tradition exemplified by Conan Doyle and Tolkien. That is, writers whose creations have gained an existence outside of the original texts in which they were published.

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chapter.

The Rosicrucian Discourse: The Creation of a Tradition

In the preceding chapter we discussed the similarities and differences between the Rosicrucian tales and science fiction. One of the most interesting elements of the phenomena surrounding the appearance of these texts is the incorporation of a fictional creation (the Rosicrucian society) into the image of social "reality." In this chapter I intend to discuss the Rosicrucian tales as a type of literature that seems to have the power of modifying the reality of the society which gives rise to it.

In this effort we must make a logical distinction between that sort of literature which brings about a change in society through reflection of existing conditions and another kind which serves only to create a position for itself. For example, the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe reflected the injustice suffered by black slaves in the United States and served to incite the public to modify this unpleasant reality. In the same sense, the novels of Charles Dickens served to bring to the public attention the exploitation of workers in his own time. In the process, both of these authors were able to create characters which so typified a kind of human behavior that

we still use the terms "Scrooge" and "Uncle Tom." In contrast I wish only to speak of literature which invents that which does not yet exist and so affects the consciousness of its audience that it becomes an accepted part of reality. We have already seen how the Rosicrucian tales progressed from a simple, literary fiction to an existing fraternity.

In his book Orientalism Edward Said speaks of the creation of a textual myth that affects the way Occidental people deal with the Orient and its inhabitants.

> Two situations favor a textual attitude. One is when a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant. In such a case one has recourse to not only what in one's previous experience the novelty resembles but also to what one has read about it. Travel books and guide books are about as "natural" a kind of text, as logical in their composition and in their use, as any book one can think of, precisely because of this human tendency to fall back on a text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity. Many travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country that it wasn't what they expected, meaning that it wasn't what a book said it would be...The idea in either case is that people , places and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, than the actuality it describes.[1]

In the case of the Rosicrucian texts the element of description of the East comes to the fore in the Fama Fra-

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[1]Edward Said, Orientalism, New York: Random House, p 93.

ternitatis. Said argues that, for the most part, texts written about the East by Western authors tend to typify the Orientals as being less organized and scientific than their Occidental counterparts. As we have seen previously, this is not the case in the Fama Fraternitatis. Except for the "false" religion to which they ascribe, Christian Rosencreutz's teachers in the lands of the Arabs are much more advanced in science and social interaction than the Europeans who refuse to accept his knowledge.

Said goes on to say that a successful publication on a given topic may tend to create a whole means of dealing with a topic in the "real world."

> There is a complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read, and this in turn influences writers to take up subjects defined in advance by the readers' experiences.[2]

The relevance of this train of thought to the history of the reception of the Rosicrucian texts is obvious. The first two texts inspired belief in a mystical society based upon knowledge derived from the Orient. The Chymische Hochzeit elaborated on this theme, becoming more specific about the wonders attainable as well as the trappings of the mysterious society. In fact, it was only after the publication of the three original Rosicrucian texts that there

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[2]Orientalism, p. 94.

came into being a "real" society of would be alchemists who followed the precepts of that redoubtable traveler, teacher, and imaginary figure, Christian Rosencreutz.

> Most important, such texts can <u>create</u> not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michael Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. This kind of text is composed out of those preexisting units of information deposited by Flaubert in the catalogue of <u>Idées reçues</u>.[3]

The balance of this chapter will deal with the phenomenon of the Rosicrucian texts as they are similar to other examples of literature which develop a framework of "reality." We will deal with texts that have created a niche in their real world in the manner described above by Said, that is, they have developed a discourse which enables the writer of subsequent texts to use the images and concepts of the original fiction as freely as if they were objects existing in the empirical world. In fact, in some cases, empirical reality struggles to bring forth the images that were originally textual in nature.

The examples which are selected for this chapter do not, strictly speaking, form a genre in themselves; they only demonstrate the creation of a discourse based on fic-

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[3]<u>Orientalism</u>, p. 94.

tion which extends beyond the realm of normal fictional creations. In fact the style and elements of the discourse created by the authors discussed are quite different. The similarity lies not in the form, but in their measure of success.

The series of stories by Arthur Conan Doyle dealing with the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes are an outstanding example of this phenomenon. Bill Blackbeard speaks of the almost universal recognizability of this character in his Sherlock Holmes in America:

> Among these famed images, that of Holmes possesses a curious ambiguity, for it exists in two distinct forms. One of these is the ascetic, pale, lean, hawk-nosed Englishman in smoking jacket, with a straight pipe, who represents Holmes immediately to his cognosenti audience but means little to the general public unless the Holmes name is attached as an identifying label. The other is a basically faceless image which features a magnifying glass, a meerschaum calabash pipe, and a deerstalkercap (with or without a plaid cape to match the deerstalker) instantly communicates Sherlock Holmes! to anyone on sight.[4]

As the above quotation indicates, the discourse developed by Conan Doyle and his successors has more than one level. At the base of the pyramid like structure is the popular image of Sherlock Holmes which all the world can recognize. The apex is represented by the image of Holmes which is recog-

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[4]Bill Blackbeard. Sherlock Holmes in America, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981. p. 10.

nized only by those familiar with the picture presented in the original texts by Conan Doyle. Blackbeard goes on to develop an alluring argument which states that the universal nature of a given fictional character is heavily dependent upon the attractiveness of the "physical image."

> Of the several factors involved in the lasting popularity of any narrative work of art, whether in prose fiction, poetry, cinema, comic strip, or drama, the primary one is arguably the appeal of the physical images of the characters to a broad spectrum of readers.

He believes that the coupling of the graphic images provided by illustrators with the engaging characterization furnished by Conan Doyle was the source of the lasting success of the series. This is, however, in direct contradiction to the ostensible representation of the Rosicrucian society as "Invisible"; that is, an association which despite its supernormal power, remains undistinguishable from society at large.

> ...keiner sol genötigt sein, von der Brüdershafft wegen ein gewiß Kleid zu tragen, sondern sich der Landes art gebrauchen.[5]

However, it may be that it is precisely this "hidden" character of the Rosicrucian society that provides some of the titillating attraction that has proven to be so enduring. It is because the Rosicrucians could be everywhere and yet appear to be nowhere that they stimulate the interest of

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[5]Fama Fraternitatis, p. 22.

the audience. In other words, it may be that the development of the concept of the Rosicrucian brotherhood depends upon the fact that they remain in the blind spot of the audience's eye. What is not known about the subject, at least in the case of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, seems to work as well as an engaging description towards the creation of a discourse which provides material for elaboration.

As an example of the way in which the "unseen" nature of the Rosicrucians leads to the fixing of their image in the imagination of the public, we present the following incident. In 1622 or 1623 in Paris it was reported that there appeared certain placards which announced:

> Nous Depoutez de la Rose-Croix faisons sejour visible et invisible en cette ville par le grace du tres Haut, vers qui se tourne le coeur des Justes. Nous enseignons sans livres, ni marques, et parlons les langues du pais, ou nous voulon etre, pour tirer les hommes nos semblables d'errerur de mort.[6]

It appears that in France the Rosicrucian society was looked upon as a sort of diabolic fifth column and aroused suspicion. In fact, both Peuckert and Yates mention that

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[6]This quotation appears as above -- entirely without French accents -- in Will-Erich Peuckert's Das Rosenkreutz on page 132. In Yates, an English translation appears on page 104. She ascribes this quotation to Effroyables pactions faites entre le Diable et les Prétendus Invisible, which was published anonymously in Paris in 1623. The quote appears, in German, in Michael W. Fischer's Die Aufklärung und ihr Gegenteil, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1982, p. 91. Unfortunately, the original text is not available to me.

René Descartes was accused of association with the sect when he returned to Paris after an extended sojourn in Germany.[7] The society of Rosicrucians seems to have gained in attraction through speculation that this or that famous person--either contemporary or historical--was a member.

Although, as mentioned previously, at first glance, this may seem to be in direct opposition to the attraction demonstrated by the Holmes myth, this is not the case. The similarity of attraction is based, in part, upon certain common elements in the two societies which received the respective texts. As indicated by Said, it is necessary for a text that creates a discourse to be initially successful. If the initial texts of either Conan Doyle or the Rosicrucian author(s) had not struck a sympathetic chord in their audiences, there would not have developed the elaborate structure surrounding them. In both cases the desire of the host society to believe in the advancement of mankind encouraged the creation of myths of this sort. In the early part of the seventeenth century the desire to believe that it was possible for men to gain knowledge which would make them somehow superior to their fellow man was expressed, in part, by enthusiastic reception of the Rosicrucian myth. In the Victorian era, this belief in the

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[7] The Rosicrucian Enlightenment p. 114, and Das Rosenkreutz, p. 135.

perfectibility of human knowledge and the triumph of reason and order were evident in the reverberation produced by the Holmes myth.

Michael Fischer typifies the attitudes towards human knowledge in the early part of the seventeenth century as follows:

> Die Rosenkreuzermanifeste zeichnen sich durch ihre pädagogisch-konkreten sowie praktisch-sozialen Zielsetzungen aus. Wie in der Renaissenceanthropologie steht in der "Fama" der "Mensch" in Zentrum; sein Fortschritt, sein Bewußtsein, daß sich die "Welt bessert". Das Wissen wird vervollkommnet, die Erkentnis "mehr und mehr erweitert" und es steht "eine glückliche Zeit" bevor, in der "viele wunderliche und zuvor nie gesehene Werke" geschaffen werden. Denn Gott hat einige Männer von großer Weisheit erschaffen, die alle Künste erneuern und zur Vollkommenheit führen sollen, damit der Mensch seinen eigenen Adel und seine eigene Herrlichkeit verstünde, welcher Gestalt er im Mikrokosmos ist und wie weit sich seine Kunst in die Natur erstreckt.[8]

Jack Tracy gives a slightly more cynical picture of the Victorian attitudes which both produced and fostered the myth of Sherlock Holmes

> It was the era too of the scientist and the civil engineer as hero... The Victorians believed creation to be orderly, uniform, and infinitely Newtonian...
>
> Holmes's profession as a consulting detective depended upon just the right combination of

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[8]Michael Fischer, Die Aufklärung und ihr Gegenteil: die Rolle der Geheimbünde in Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1982, p. 44.

> cultural elements -- popular acceptance of scientific principles at a time when science was still in a stage which allowed a single individual a reasonable grasp of the whole...
>
> There is something undeniably appealing about an age -- epitomized by the life and talents of Sherlock Holmes -- whose inhabitants genuinely believed themselves in control of their environment, who were yet untouched by the long term consequences of their technology...[9]

Both ages seem ripe to assert that man transcends the boundaries which were believed by their predecessors to be absolute. In seeking to push human knowledge beyond its limits the scientists of both the seventeenth century and the Victorian age set the stage for the entrance of a literary figure who purported to do so. Both Christian Rosencreutz and Sherlock Holmes owe their existence to commonly held notions of human development in their respective times.

The author(s) of the Rosicrucian works and Conan Doyle were aware that their audiences wished to believe that their fictions could be true. They accepted this line of development eagerly and sought to create characters which had as much of the "real" as they possible could instill. This principle of "vraisemblence" to the point of confusion was not only practiced by the creators of the myths; almost all

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[9]Jack Tracy, The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana or A Universal Dictionary of the State of Knowledge of Sherlock Holmes and His Biographer John H. Watson, M.D. New York: Doubleday and Company. 1977, pp. viii-xiv.

of those who continued the literary existence of these creations added to this principle of deliberate confusion of fact and fantasy. The self-fulfilling myth or discourse of the Rosicrucian texts is mirrored in the later phenomena surrounding the works of Conan Doyle. Let us take as an example of the use of the discourse of half serious acceptance of the existence of Sherlock Holmes, Tracy's statement of his goals in The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana.

> Simply stated, then, this is a book about the historical background of the Holmes adventures. While it owes a great deal to the "Sherlockian" tradition, it is not really a part of it. It is based upon the same prime assumption -- that Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson were living historical personages, that the chronicles are based on actual incidents, and that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle acted as Watson's literary agent in placing them -- and there the similarities end. The cult of "Sherlockiana" is a high-camp intellectual joke in which fact and fiction must be confused as thoroughly as possible.[10]

In this statement Tracy makes overt the covert principle which is the foundation of the popularity of the sort of literature which encompasses both the Rosicrucian and Holmsian works. The confusion of fact and fiction by the authors of the Rosicrucian works resulted in the wholesale acceptance of the myth by the willingly gullible audience.

Not only the later authors who applied the Holmes discourse were aware of the structural necessities of the crea-

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[10]The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana p.x

tion of a myth of such power. In the beginning of "The Copper Beeches" Conan Doyle has Holmes compliment Watson for divining what is truly important in his reportage of Holmes' cases.

> ...you have given prominence not so much to the many causes célèbre and sensational trials in which I have figured, but rather those incidents which may have been trivial in themselves, but which have given room for those faculties of deduction and of logical synthesis which I have made my special province.[11]

He goes on to complain that Watson has used too much dramatic license in order "...to put colour and life into your statements..."[12] Holmes says that his logic is more worthy of a "course of lectures" than "a series of tales." In this short passage Conan Doyle has demonstrated his knowledge of the source of his character's appeal. In fact, we may go so far as to state that Blackbeard's analysis of the nature of Holme's attraction to audiences is, in fact, one hundred and eighty degrees off. The appeal of Holmes is his logic, and the trappings of drama around the cases serve only to aid in the presentation of Conan Doyle's intellectual superman.

We know, of course, that the principle of confusing an

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[11]Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Copper Beeches" in The Works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle London: Octopus Books, 1981, p. 179.

[12]"The Copper Beeches," p. 179.

audience about the origins of a text has a long and honorable tradition in the history of literature. Examples abound, from the diligent efforts of Jonathan Swift to conceal his authorship of Gulliver's Travels[13] to the subtle frame-creations of E.T.A Hofmann. McPherson's Ossian (1765) hoax fooled many of Europe's leading intellectuals, including Herder and Goethe. However, it is also obvious that in the case of Christian Rosencreutz something special occurred. The myth that took rise in this common literary device has deeply etched the landscape of our culture. Although the creations of Swift and Hofmann are still enjoyed in the original format (as well as an occasional opera or television production), Sherlock Holmes and Christian Rosencreutz are still today the subject of literary and pseudo-philosophical elaboration.

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[13] In 1726 Swift returned to London after twelve years of absence in Ireland. He brought the manuscript of Gulliver's Travels with him and maintaining the fictional character of Gulliver even to the publisher, submitted the book for publication as if it were truly a collection of memoirs. To the letter which came purportedly from Gulliver's cousin, the publisher, Mr. Benjamin Motte replied that he could not meet the two hundred pound price for the manuscript all at once. However, he offered to pay after the book had met with some success. Apparently there was no need for the cautious Mr. Motte to hedge his bets in this manner as the work became a tremendous popular success. At first, even Swifts friends did not overtly break the rather tenuous illusion that he mantained about the authorship of the book.

There are, of course, distinctions between the two phenomena: those who write false histories of the life and times of Sherlock Holmes do so tongue in cheek, while the modern day Rosicrucians have little or no sense of humor concerning the factual foundations of their society.[14] These "Rosicrucians" often choose to believe that the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit were simply publications of the already existing Rosicrucian society.

The "biographers" of Sherlock Holmes deal in a mixture of nostalgia for an historical time which was simpler in its philosophical outlook as well as longing for a time and personage that never really existed. That is to say, they seek to re-create the optimistic positivistic attitudes of the Victorians towards history and, in some sense, literary studies. There is also an element of joy in the literary hoax; the continuation of a tradition of fiction seen as fact. Discussion of the Holmes stories of the sort represented by Tracy's book do not delve into modern

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[14]A notable exception may be found in the works of Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea to continue the Rosicrucian myth in The Illuminatus! Trilogy, New York: Dell, 1975. The irreverent and humorous elaboration on the Rosicrucian tales by Robert Anton Wilson in several series of novels will be discussed in more detail in our next chapter.

literary theories nor do they speculate on the mechanics of the creation of the texts. The tales created by Conan Doyle are accepted wholesale as the absolute truth and attempts are made to reconcile the historical material available concerning the Victorian era and Holme's fictional environs. In order to do this it is necessary, of course, to have some pat explanation which will serve to smooth over the natural differences between fiction and fact. One of these is to claim that Dr. Watson had reported matters inefficiently. This device is used even in the original texts by Arthur Conan-Doyle. Holmes gives a review of "Watson's" "A Study in Scarlet":

> Honestly, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.[15]

Another way in which to deal with the discrepancy between the account of things in Conan Doyle's text and the historical facts is to call into question Holme's source of information, when common knowledge of our own time contradicts the facts as reported by Holmes:

> **Ku Klux Klan**, a secret society founded in the southern part of the United States about 1866. The

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[15]Arthur Conan Doyle, "the SIgn of Four" in The Works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, London: Octopus, p. 627.

> primary object of the society was social improvement, but its political purpose was to intimidate Negroes and those who favoured the government's reconstruction measures, and thus to prevent them from voting. Many outrages were committed by them and in 1871 the government took active steps to break up the organization. The description found in Holme's American Encyclopoedia is almost wholly false.[16]

When we contrast this description with the one found in Doyle's The Five Orange Pips, the principle of filling in the holes in the original fiction becomes clear.

> Ku Klux Klan. A name derived from a fanciful resemblance to the sound produced by cocking a rifle...Its outrages were usually preceeded by a warning sent to the marked man in some fantastic but generally recognized shape--a spring of oak leaves in some parts, melon seeds or orange pips in others...Eventually in the year 1879, the movement rather suddenly collapsed, although there have been sporadic outbreaks of the same sort since that date.[17]

Conan Doyle's possibly racist and rather fanciful image of the Ku Klux Klan has been sanitized for modern sensibilities which do not allow the romanticizing of the widely abhorred American group.

In the case of the Rosicrucian texts there is an equivalent practice of retrospective verification of questionable facts or indeterminate description. The desire of the audience to have definite facts concerning the mystic

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[16]The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana, p. 205

[17]Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Five Orange Pips," in The Works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle London: Octopus Books, 1981, p. 84.

practices and powers of the society was circumvented through the esoteric tradition of mysteries fit only for the initiated. However, there is also constant promise of more revelation in the Rosicrucian works. The Fama Fraternitatis gives a few "facts" about the Rosicrucian Brotherhood which are elaborated in the Confessio Fraternitatis and then the Chymische Hochzeit expands upon the experience of Christian Rosencreutz. The necessity of a developing discourse are met within the initial three texts. In our next chapter we shall see that this trend is maintained, where we deal with publications that continue the story of the Rosicrucians after the seventeenth century.

Throughout the course of this discussion an important difference between the reception of the Holmes texts and that of the Rosicrucian texts has not been dealt with. That is the fact that the Victorian audience seems to **wish** to be deceived about the factual nature of the text. Although Sherlock Holmes is admittedly a fictional character, the audience wants to believe in him. Therefore a mechanism of false verification was developed that many enthusiasts and scholars pretend to accept as real.

We will now deal with the similarity of the discourse created in the twentieth century around the fantastic texts

written by J.R.R. Tolkien. His The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings trilogy had an enormous impact upon modern readers. Many believe that these four texts were influential in the creation of a great deal of the modern genre called Sword and Sorcery Fantasy.

When one surveys the critical literature concerning The Lord of the Rings, it becomes immediately apparent that the immense popular success of the series has caused the conservative scholarly community to draw back in confusion:

> As those few who reject The Lord of the Rings as a significant work of literature always say and as some who make the most extravagant claims for it demonstrate, the extraordinary popular success of Tolkien is the product of irrational adulation and is due to a variety of nonliterary cultural and social phenomena. It would be, then, the function of Tolkien criticism to shift the emphasis from extraliterary aspects of the trilogy and its audience to a consideration of the work itself. Such consideration might then answer some of the basic questions about such matters as genre, influences, sources, relationships and the like.[18]

The significance of The Lord of the Rings for this dissertation is founded on the creation of a discourse through its immense popularity. It does not seem unreasonable to investigate what "literary" elements contribute to the creation of this popular success in order to compare it with

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[18]Niel D. Isaacs, "On Writing Tolkien Criticism," in Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien's **The Lord of the Rings**, ed. by Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1972, p. 3.

that of the Rosicrucian tales. The study of literature cannot ignore the function of the audience/author relationship if it hopes to gain insight into literary works. It is possible that the time has come in which "eternal" literary verities are no longer accepted as absolute.

Tolkien was, like Johann Valentin Andreae, an academic for the most part of his life. However, The Lord of the Rings was not a production of a young student but rather the product of the imagination of a mature scholar. Although the author of the Lord of the Rings made no attempt to disguise his authorship of the works, nor did he seek to pass off the texts as real, Tolkien's delightful fantasy has a complex frame story which gives an internal narrative effect of a factual publication. The adventures are recorded in a convincing imitation of an epic which has been edited by a competent scholar; it includes extensive appendices as well as footnotes which refer to non-existent reference works. Like the works of Conan Doyle before it, The Lord of the Rings includes a mechanism by which the microworld of the text is self-sufficient. For this reason it would appear that the discourse surrounding these works was established firmly enough to support an extensive corpus of further writings, including critical, mock critical, continuations, imitations, and of course parody.

Like the writer(s) of the Rosicrucian texts before him, Tolkien did not attempt to create the microworld of whole cloth for The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. He drew heavily upon the preexisting discourse surrounding the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Norse epic mythology. Some critics believe that Tolkien actually returned the concepts of the discourse of the fairy tale to its original potency:

> The Lord of the Rings is a fairy tale in the highest aspect of its kind--which requires some discussion. Fairy is prominent in the long lexicon of words ruined by the nasty vulgarism of our time--at least in the American culture. It is probably irrecoverable for several generations because it has been made a sniggering, derisive synonym for homosexual...To be fair, this corruption had earlier roots, and has since reached its peak of nauseousness in the excruciating cuteness of Walt Disney.[19]

One may compare this with the modification that the author(s) of the Rosicrucian texts made to the existing corpus of alchemical tales. As mentioned previously, strictly speaking, the Rosicrucian tales are not true alchemical allegory. They are instances of the use of the imagery and mystique of texts of the sort written by Paracelcus for theological and literary purposes. Through the powerful reapplication of the discourse of alchemy the Rosicrucian tales achieved a restructuring of the whole

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[19]Edmund Fuller, "The Lord of the Hobbits: J.R.R. Tolkien," in Tolkein and the Critics, p. 22.

notion of the alchemist. From a solitary figure attempting to create gold and medicine he is transformed into a pious member of a society working for the betterment of mankind. In the Chymische Hochzeit Christian Rosencreutz meets, on the second day of his journey, with several people who represent the image of the false alchemist. They claim knowledge that they do not have and are roundly humiliated when the time of judgment arrives.[20] Andreae has used the existing image of the alchemist openly in order to contrast it with his newly created mythology. When Conan Doyle created his Holmes figure he built upon other writers who had success with similar sorts of stories. It may be that other writers had written detective-type stories before Conan Doyle, but in general, we may attribute the initial popularity of the form to the appearance of the Holmes stories.[21] Tolkein, like Andreae, took an existing set of rules and popular concepts and attempted to make them new in a way which was closer to their original conception. One of the techniques Tolkien used to modify the existing discourse was the addition of new types of non-human characters to the existing canon of "fairy figures."

Hobbits are an unobtrusive but very ancient

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[20]Chymische Hochzeit, pp. 58 ff.

[21]Edger Allen Poe (1809-1849) and Emile Gaboriau (1832-1873) also wrote early "detective stories."

> people, more numerous formerly than they are today; for they love peace and quiet and good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favorite haunt...
>
> For they are a little people, smaller than Dwarves: less stout and stocky, that is, even when they are not actually much shorter...
>
> It is plain to see that in spite of later estrangement Hobbits are relatives of ours: far nearer to us than Elves or even Dwarves. Of old they spoke the languages of Men, after their own fashion, and liked and disliked much the same things as Men did. [22]

This modification of existing mythology through the addition of the figure of the Hobbit among the familiar forms of Dwarves and Elves served to estrange Tolkein's narrative: to indicate clearly that he was not just adding to the already existing fund of fairy stories.[23] Tolkien's renewal of the genre of the fairy tale is based, to some extent, upon the immense amount of detail he provided with the text. This is in direct contrast to the sparse descriptions provided in the Rosicrucian tales. One may conjecture that the Rosicrucian myth was able to develop an extensive discourse because of the freedom from constraints allowed by its indeterminate position with regard to reality. Because

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[22] J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, part I, The Fellowship of the Ring, London: Unwin, 1983, pp. 13-4.

[23] Fuller says: "Sir Stanley Unwin told me that the first negotiations for the German publication of The Hobbit were broken off abruptly when the publishers wrote that they had searched through all the encyclopedias and found that there was no such thing as a hobbit." Fuller, p.19

the audience of the Rosicrucian tales was allowed to accept the statements in the three stories as fact, it was much easier to elaborate on them. The twentieth century allowed no such latitude for the majority of readers of The Lord of the Rings. Instead of a hoax which could draw upon the common experiences of the everyday world, The Lord of the Rings provided the reader with a very complete alternate world; one which could be developed within its own framework. Thus, we find publications written in the same vein of mock seriousness as the texts which attempt to explicate the life and times of Sherlock Holmes.

> That Tolkien apparently invented the languages [alphabets, grammar and dictionaries of mythical tongues found in The Lord of the Rings] is no PROOF that they are altogether fictional. Their resemblances to languages of our own day--Finnish and Welsh--and the resemblances of many of their words to words of other tongues might be considered a stronger argument...Or it might be that some of the spirit and the being of those Elves clings still to the land, as a ghostly aura of enchantment...and the languages of Men have not been unaffected.[24]

There is no possibility for the afficianadoes of Conan Doyle and Tolkein's work to accept them as real, so they

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[24]Jim Allan, An Introduction to Elvish: and to Other Tongues and Proper Names and Writing Systems of the Third Age of the Western Lands of Middle-Earth as Set Forth in the Published Writings of Professor John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, Hayes: Bran's Head, 1978 p. xiii.

must present them as quasi-realistic elaborations. The Rosicrucians in their last three centuries of history have been able to develop a false history that leads the gullible to believe, join and--sad to say--contribute to a society which began its existence as a literary fiction.

In our next chapter we will deal with the texts that elaborate on the Rosicrucian myth as they have developed over the centuries. Those texts which follow the original works and present themselves as fiction will be given primacy over information concerning groups of "practicing" Rosicrucians.

Continuations of the Rosicrucian Tradition

In the chapter concerning the Rosicrucian tales as a form of discourse we indicated that these seventeenth century texts have formed the basis for a continuing literary tradition. For the purposes of our discussion it is convenient to divide the texts making use of the images, characters and situations put forth in the early Rosicrucian tales into two broad categories. The first group consists of true works of literature which present themselves as fiction and use the Rosicrucian material in a straightforward fictional fashion. The second group is comprised of those works which attempt to pass off the Rosicrucian society as actual, historical fact. The first group of works may be considered to follow the spirit of the Chymische Hochzeit, while texts in the second group continue in the tradition of the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis. The volume of material to be found in both groups is such that it would be impossible to deal with it exhaustively in a study of this kind. For this reason this chapter will consist of a survey of the existing texts. Selections have been made to reflect major literary periods as well as by the distinctions of mode mentioned previously. It is hoped that this material will provide insight into the powerful effect that the

indeterminate nature of the original three Rosicrucian works has had upon subsequent continuations of the discourse.

St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian

In the early part of the nineteenth century the young Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote a Gothic novel entitled St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian which demonstrates succinctly the way in which the term Rosicrucian had come to be used in that period. The text was written by Shelley while he was still at Eaton and was published in 1810 while the author was attending Oxford. It is generally conceded that Shelley was heavily influenced by the Gothic style as practiced by William Godwin.

> Captain Medwin tells us that this [St. Irvyne] was suggested by "St. Leon" [by Godwin] a work which he had read till he believed there was truth in alchemy and the elixir vitae.[1]

William Godwin was the father of Mary, Shelley's wife.[2] St. Leon is the story of a man who, after loosing his fortune at gambling, is given the secret of eternal life and limitless wealth by a mysterious stranger. The stranger

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[1]Charles S. Middleton, Shelley and his Writings, Vol. 1, London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1858, p. 57.

[2]Mary Shelley became famous in her own right through her publication of the perennial science fiction favorite Frankenstein (1818).

makes the character, St. Leon, promise not to reveal these secrets to anyone, including his wife. This secret causes the dissolution of St. Leon's family and he travels to Spain where he is imprisoned by the Inquisition as an alchemist. After twelve years in prison he escapes to Hungary where he is again imprisoned. St. Leon is rescued by his own son who does not recognize him because immortals do not age. The son suspects his father of desiring his beloved and challenges St. Leon to a duel. The story ends as St. Leon must again flee.[3]

It is unlikely that Shelley had any contact with the three original Rosicrucian texts; instead he drew images of the movement from Godwin and other Gothic writers on the general topic of alchemy rather than the original Rosicrucian texts in particular. St. Irvyne is his second, and final, exercise in the Gothic novel and demonstrates concerns that lead the author away from the Gothic mode towards his later, more successful, style. This novel was preceeded by Zastrozzi, which was published in 1810. Zastrozzi is a more traditional Gothic novel lacking philosophical leanings as well as the Rosicrucian references which distinguish St. Irvyne.

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[3]For a comprehensive analysis of St. Leon see Don Locke, A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, pp. 145-49.

The St. Irvyne narrative opens with the scene of Wolfstein, a young German noble, standing on a precipice in the Swiss Alps on a stormy night contemplating suicide. He faints for a moment and awakes to find that he is in the middle of a robbers' ambush of a monk's funeral procession. Because of bravery, which was inspired by despair, he is invited to join the troop of thieves. Wolfstein continues with some success in his newly chosen career until the band happens to capture a young woman, Megalena de Metastasio. The name brings to mind that of Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) who wrote melodramas which were used as librettos for operas by Handel, Hayden, Mozart and Gluck, as well as the medical term metastasis, which refers to the transference of disease from one organ of the body to another. This connection with the spread of disease may be an overt reference to the moral disease that infects Wolfstein because of his association with the girl. Wolfstein and the leader of the bandits, Calvigni, both find the girl attractive and the result of this competition is that Wolfstein poisons his leader and flees with the girl. Wolfstein is at first thwarted in his murder attempt through the intervention of Ginotti, another of the thieves. After the young German successfully accomplishes the murder, Ginotti enables Wolfstein and Megalena to flee the enraged group, but

demands:

> Will you promise that when, destitute and a wanderer, I demand your protection, when I beseech you to listen to the tale which I shall relate, you will listen to me; that, when I am dead, you will bury me, and suffer my soul to rest in the endless slumber of annihilation?[4]

Years later, Wolfstein and Megalena are living in Genoa when Ginotti returns and says that he has chosen to reveal some horrific secret to Wolfstein. Wolfstein and Megalena flee to Bohemia but Ginotti finds them again. He reveals that long ago he was a student at the University of Salamanca and that he had discovered the secret of eternal life, which he wishes to pass on to Wolfstein. This immortality is the sole reason that Ginotti is considered to be a Rosicrucian as well as a direct reference to the theme of immortality in Godwin's St. Leon. Shelley makes no attempt to integrate the Rosicrucian society described in the Fama Fraternitatis into his work. Neither does he involve the character of Christian Rosenkreutz as he appears in the Chymische Hochzeit. In order to receive the secret, the German is to meet Ginotti at the castle of St. Irvyne in France. In the confusing conclusion of the story Ginotti is

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[4]Percy Bysshe Shelley, St. Irvine or the Rosicruician, in Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne or the Rosicrucian, New York: Arno 1977, rpt. of Zastrozzi London: J. Wilkie and G. Robinson, 1810, and St. Irvyne, London: J.J. Stockdale, 1811. p.144.

transformed into a living skeleton by a bolt of lightning and Wolfstein dies because he cannot bring himself to deny God.

This tale has a secondary plot line dealing with Eloise St. Irvyne and an evil man named Nempere who abuses her. Eloise is rescued by a benevolent Englishman, Fitzeustace, who takes her home to be his wife after Nempere is killed in a duel. Shelley's sole attempt to integrate the two plot lines consists of the laconic statement at the end of the novel "Ginotti is Nempere. Eloise is the sister of Wolfstein."[5]

This short summary of the plot(s) of Shelley's St. Irvyne serves to illustrate the Gothic modification of the term Rosicrucian. They are no longer a benevolent society of mortals who attempt to improve the lot of their fellow man, they are now malevolent, immortal individuals who murder and abuse others at will. Rosicrucian seems to be used as a simple synonym for wizard.[6] Although Shelley seems to have been conversant with texts on alchemy, the basic notion of

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[5]Shelley, St. Irvyne, p. 219.

[6]The mitigating circumstance for any talk of immortality being associated with the Rosicrucian society may be found in the section of the Appendix to this study which deals with the Confessio Fraternitatis. In this text there is a mere hint of immortality mentioned, as it were, in passing.

the Rosicrucian's use of chemistry as a metaphor for the improvement of the soul is not present in this work. There is no attempt to emulate the style of Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, or the Chymische Hochzeit and one doubts that Shelley had even read the three works which provide the subtitle for his novel.

Zanoni: A Rosicrucian Tale

In 1843 Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-73) published Zanoni: A Rosicrucian Tale. Bulwer-Lytton was a man of many talents who was secretary of state for the British colonies as well as a successful novelist.

> Among Victorian novelists none more stoutly defended the literary romance than Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and few led more singularly romantic lives. Little about Bulwer can be considered prosaic. At one time or other he was a fashionable dandy, an advanced political radical, a grand patron of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, a cabinet minister, a nominee for the throne of Greece, and a popular novelist and playwright. [7]

Because of Bulwer-Lytton's involvement in an "actual" Rosicrucian society, whatever its true antecedents, the text of Zanoni is, therefore, not intended to be a revelation of the Rosicrucian "secrets," but rather a didactic tale which

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[7]James L. Campbell Sr. Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986, p. 1.

would lead the canny reader along the path towards enlightenment.

> His novel [Zanoni] is best read as a fairy tale written for adults, a kind of metaphysical parable of first moral causes.... It is an occult parable reaffirming the Christian virtues of faith, love and self-sacrifice; a spiritual autobiography and bildungsroman...; a political polemic against the ideas causing and carrying forward the French Revolution; a treatise on romantic aesthetics... and a discourse on the natural causes underlying the occult sciences, reflecting Bulwer's belief that the supernatural is but the natural as yet undiscovered.[8]

As the above quotation indicates, despite his involvement in the English Rosicrucian society, Bulwer-Lytton was not an absolutely convinced mystic. He treated his occult interests as if they were scientific investigations, and presumably expected his audience to do likewise.

Zanoni is actually the end result of two previous versions of tales concerning the Rosicrucians written by Bulwer-Lytton. The first untitled attempt was begun in 1825 and never finished. The second, Zicci, came to Bulwer-Lytton in a dream. This fragmentary novella was published in the magazine The Monthly Chronicle in 1838 and it forms the basis of books one and two of Zanoni, which were published in 1842. The lasting effect that Zanoni has had upon the development of the Rosicrucian discourse has more than earned it a place in our discussion. As the analysis of sub-

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[8]Edward Bulwer-Lytton, p. 113.

sequent texts will amply prove, Zanoni was accepted by both earnest Rosicrucians and writers of Rosicrucian fiction as a valid source text. Those who would accept the Rosicrucian society as an historical reality considered Zanoni a coded report by an initiate into that mystical society. Writers of fiction eagerly seized upon the atmosphere and style of the novel and used it to embellish their own creations.

Zanoni begins with a frame story describing the meeting of the narrator with an old gentleman in a bookshop devoted to alchemical and mystical texts. The old man befriends the narrator and leaves him in his will the text of Zanoni, written in a cryptic code. The narrator then proceeds to translate Zanoni into English. The old gentleman in the frame story is one of the characters in the novel, the Englishman Glyndon. The accuracy of the narrator's translation of text is called into question by the following statement:

> Truth compels me also to confess that, with all my pains, I am by no means sure that I have invariably given the true meaning of the cipher; nay, that here and there either a gap in the narrative, or the sudden assumption of a new cipher, to which no key was afforded, has obliged me to resort to interpolations of my own, no doubt easily discernible, but which I flatter myself, are not inharmonious to the general design.[9]

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[9]Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Zanoni: A Rosicrucian Tale, New York: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1971, p. 15.

The frame story, which is of a sort very common in both Gothic and Romantic texts, serves to emphasize the intention of the author to present the book as a kind of parable. In this sense it is vaguely similar to the device used at the end of the Chymische Hochzeit whereby the text is declared incomplete: "Hie mangeln ungefehr zwey quart Bletlin, und ist er (Autor huius), da er vermeinet, er muste morgens Thorhüter sein, heim kommen."[10] The textual nature of the novel is, in both cases, emphasized. Both the Chymische Hochzeit and Zanoni call into question the veracity of their report by pointing out that the story is incomplete.

The novel proper begins in Naples in the eighteenth century. A musician, Gaetano Pisani, and his daughter Viola, an opera singer, are introduced. Viola's affections are split between an Englishman, Glyndon, and Zanoni, the character for whom the novel is named. This mysterious character is said to have come from the East, and early on in the novel there are hints that he possesses powers beyond those of a mortal man. These include the persistent rumor that he is immortal. Old men claim to have seen Zanoni in their youth, and insist that he has not aged. Clarence Glyndon is presented as a likable figure, although he is unable to completely commit himself to Viola because of his

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[10]Chymische Hochzeit, p.124.

fears of his family's reaction to the fact that she is considered to be his social inferior. Although he is in Italy studying to be a painter, Glyndon is actually a dilettante who never seems to bring to completion any project he has started. Zanoni and Glyndon are rivals for Viola's affections, even though both have some reservations about actually winning her. Zanoni fears the suffering naturally entailed by a union of mortal and immortal. The struggle for Viola's hand is further complicated by a local Prince who wishes to abduct the young singer and have his way with her. Zanoni rescues her and urges Glyndon to take her to England as his bride, but the would-be-painter now wishes to obtain the mystic powers of his rival. Glyndon gives up Viola and goes off with Zanoni's teacher Mejnour. The Englishman finds himself unequal to the task of obtaining adept status and flees, haunted by the images revealed to him during his aborted initiation. Zanoni and Viola go to Greece where she bears a son. While on a trip to Venice, Glyndon finds Viola and convinces her to run away from her husband because of his sorcery. The scene shifts to Paris in the throes of the French Revolution. Glyndon and Viola have fled there and are imprisoned while trying to flee to less turbulent environs. Zanoni comes to save the day and trades himself for Viola and his son's freedom. Viola dies of natural causes soon

after her husband's appointment with the guillotine and the novel ends with the "orphan child" smiling in the dungeon.[11]

This ending is significant in the tradition of secret societies because of the emphasis upon the child as an orphan. The Freemasons--a group often closely linked with the Rosicrucians--use the figure of the widow's son in their imagery. In the Freemasonic context the widow's son stands for Hiram, the builder of king Solomon's temple[12]:

> 13 And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.
> 14 He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.[13]

The linking of the Rosicrucian and Freemasonic movements becomes stronger in the texts we will discuss as we approach modern times.

The Rosicrucians are mentioned explicitly several times in the text of Zanoni. One of the first references is in the

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[11]The similarity of this ending with that of Charles Dickens' Tale of Two Cities, which was published in 1859 is remarkable. In Dickens' novel one character (Sidney Carton) substitutes himself so that another may escape the guillotine. See Edward Bulwer-Lytton p. 118.

[12]We will discuss other interpretations of the phrase "the widow's son" later.

[13]Bible, King James Version, I Kings, I, verses 13-14.

context of Zanoni's remarkable fluency in languages:

> This faculty was one which Glyndon called to mind, that sect, whose tenets and powers have never been more than most partially explored, the Rosicrucians especially arrogated. He remembered to have heard in Germany of the work of John Bringeret, asserting that all the languages of earth were known to the genuine Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross.[14]

Apparently Glyndon's memory was faulty, for the only name that remotely resembles Bringeret mentioned by students of the Rosicrucian movement is that of Johannes Bringer, who published Gründlicher Bericht von dem Vorhaben, Gelegenheit und Inhalt der löblichen Bruderschaft des Rosenkreutz, gestellt durch einen unbekannten, aber doch fürnehmen derselbigen Bröderschaft Mitgenossen in 1617.[15] The date given in a footnote in Zanoni is 1615, but there is no indication as to whether the mistake is Bulwer-Lytton's or the editor of this edition. In the original three Rosicrucian texts there is no mention of any special skills in language so we may assume that this is another case of an addition to the legend, either by Bulwer-Lytton or by one of the earlier writers on the Rosicrucian theme. However, as this demonstrates, there is some attempt to link the Rosicrucians described in Zanoni with the Rosicrucian movement as

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[14]Zanoni, p. 95.

[15]See Das Rosencreutz, pp 67, 122, 124.

described in the seventeenth century.

At the head of Book III, chapter one of Zanoni (p. 116) there is a quotation in English attributed to a manuscript entitled Account of the Origin and Attributes of the true Rosicrucians by J. von D-- which indicates that the Rosicrucians are most distinguished by their knowledge of medicine.[16] This, at least, is in keeping with the statements in the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis although no specific reference is made to either text.

The closest thing to a direct reference to any of the original Rosicrucian texts is in a statement by Mejnour when Glyndon accuses him of claiming membership in the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross:

> "Do you imagine," answered Mejnour, "that there were no mystic and solemn unions of men seeking the same end through the same means, before the Arabians of Damus, in 1378, taught to a wandering German the secrets which founded the institution of the Rosicrucians? I allow, however, that the Rosicrucians formed a sect descended from the greater and earlier school. They were wiser than the Alchemists--their masters are wiser than they."
>
> "And of this early and primary order how many still exist?"
>
> "Zanoni and myself."[17]

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[16]Bulwer-Lytton has an annoying habit of starting his chapters with quotations which have partial references and are sometimes in original languages and sometimes in translation.

[17]Zanoni, p. 217.

This summary of the Fama Fraternitatis serves to delineate the course of much of the post seventeenth century Rosicrucian writing. The tales of the formation of the sect in the fourteenth century are not venerable--or perhaps exotic--enough for the authors, so they attempt to shift the inception of the mystic brotherhood back into earlier times. Also, the orderly and quiet succession of brothers described in the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis is discarded for the myth of immortality. This may have been based upon the account in the Fama Fraternitatis of Christian Rosenkreutz's uncorrupted body found in the tomb after one hundred years.

Bulwer-Lytton's Zanoni combines mysticism with a direct attack upon the principles of a deterministic universe as espoused during the French Revolution. Much is made of the decadent and inherently evil aesthetic principle of the revolutionaries, while a plea for the return of Platonic principles based upon religious ideals is put forward. It would appear that to Bulwer-Lytton, as to J. V. Andreae, Rosicrucianism was a branch of Christian mysticism. James L. Campbell indicates that Bulwer-Lytton uses the character of Glyndon in the frame story to present the Rosicrucians as simply "one branch of the occult fraternity." "In fact,

Zanoni should not be read as a Rosicrucian romance but as an occult parable based upon Chaldean and Platonist concepts."[18] However, there seems no way to determine the degree of belief of either author in the existence of an actual Rosicrucian brotherhood other than Bulwer-Lytton's membership in a modern, British Rosicrucian society. In Bulwer-Lytton's novel the tradition of the literary hoax is maintained in a rather cursory fashion by the frame story alone, as there was no attempt to publish the work anonymously. Nonetheless, Zanoni is definitely more within the tradition of the three original Rosicrucian texts than, for example, Shelley's St.Irvyne.

Le Comte de Gabalis: ou Entretiens sur les sciences Secrètes

In 1670 there appeared in France a novel entitled Le Comte de Gabalis by Montfaucon de Villars which, although generally conceded to be a minor work of literature, met with considerable success. This text is a critique of secret societies in the tradition of the best satires and as such has been taken by some to have been directed at the Rosicrucians.[19] In some library indexes it is listed under

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[18]Edward Bulwer-Lytton, p. 116.

[19]Erika Treske, Der Rosenkreutzerroman Le Comte de

Demonology and Rosicrucians, and the English translation of 1680 by Philip Ayres uses the term Rosicrucian interchangeably with "cabalist," which is an accurate translation of the term used in the original French text .[20] Nevertheless, the actual text of Le Comte de Gabalis does not mention the term Rosicrucian. Auguste Viatte makes a distinction between the Rosicrucians and Gabalis when speaking of the English Freemason, Lord Ramsay:

> ... un curieux manuscrit de la Bibliothèque d'Aix-en-Provence nous le montre voisin des Roses-Croix. Ses doctrines forment un trait d'union entre le comte de Gabalis et le martinisme.[21]

The only reason it is discussed here is that there must be a reason why Le Comte de Gabalis has been perceived as a Rosicrucian text. It is interesting to note that even a text published so soon after the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and Chymische Hochzeit demonstrates the blurring of lines between Rosicrucian and other secret

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Gabalis und die geistigen Strömungen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, Berlin: Universität Greifswald, 1933.

[20]Philip Ayres trans. The Count of Gabalis: or The extravagant mysteries of the Cabalists, expoased in five pleasant discourses on the secret sciences..., London: B.M., 1680.

[21]Aguste Viatte, Les Sources Occultes du Romantisme: Illuminisme-Théosophie 1720-1820, vol. 1, Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928, p. 35.

societies. As time goes on, authors assume that all alchemists as well as all secret societies, be they political or occult in nature, may be subsumed under the term Rosicrucian. While providing a great deal of possible source material for our discussion, this proliferation and broadening of the term makes difficult the task of sorting out relevant texts.

Le Comte de Gabalis is a humorous look at a series of dialogues between a self styled adept and a sly scoffer who amuses himself at the expense of his friend. The novel opens with the comment that the Count of Gabalis has recently died of apoplexy and the narrator is certain that others may suspect that this is his punishment for revealing the secrets of his sect. The secret society described in the three original Rosicrucian texts does not have any punishment for those who reveal its secret knowledge. In the Chymische Hochzeit punishment is meted out to those who claim more knowledge than they actually possess. Also, Christian Rosenkreutz is humiliated for his curiosity concerning Venus. Despite these examples of punishment, the general attitude of the works is that those who would reveal secrets are not given any information they might put in jeopardy. In witty contrast to the closed society of the three original Rosicrucian texts, we find that the narrator of Le Comte de Gabalis has done the following:

> ...je me suis avisé (pour éviter d'estre injuste & pour ne me point fatiguer d'une lecture ennuyeuse) de feindre d'estre entesté de tous ces Sciences, avec tous ceux que j'ai pû apprendre qui en sont touchez. J'ay d'abord eu plus de succez que je n'en avois mesme esperé.[22]

His great success has brought him into contact with all walks of life and he hears of communication with angels, devils, and elemental spirits.

> Les uns en vouloiet aux Anges, les autres au diable, les autres à leur genie, les autres aux Incubes, les autres à la guerison de tous maux, les autres aux Astres, les autres aux secrets de la Divinité, & presque tous à la Pierre Philosophale.[23]

De Villars has brought his satiric wit to bear against the same type of people who are mocked in the Chymische Hochzeit:

> Ich sahe einen, der hörte die Himmel rauschen. Der ander kunde Platonis Ideas sehen. Der dritte wolte Democriti Atomos zehlen. So waren auch der ewig mobilisten nicht wenig.[24]

In a comparison of these two quotations the reader cannot fail to realize that both Montfaucon de Villars and Johann Valentin Andreae are speaking of the same topic. For this reason, although the term Rosicrucian may not be mentioned in the Le Comte de Gabalis, it appears to be cut from

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[22]Montfaucon de Villars, Le Comte de Gabalis: ou Entretiens sur les sciences Secrètes, Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1963, p. 70.

[23]Le Comte de Gabalis, p. 70.

[24]Chymische Hochzeit, pp.59-60.

the same cloth.

The narrator of Le Comte de Gabalis begins a correspondence with a famous adept from Germany who comes to visit him in Paris. This is the Count of Gabalis and he embarks upon a series of discourses with the narrator concerning the mysteries. Gabalis claims that he and other adepts are constantly in touch with creatures "les anciens Sages ont nommé Ondins, ou Nymphes."[25] The dialogues continue, not because the narrator believes Gabalis, but because he is having immense fun mocking the would be sorcerer. Once when the narrator has an important guest during one of their conversations, Gabalis offers to become invisible in order to avoid interrupting. The narrator laughingly invites Gabalis to wait in his study. The novel ends with the statement:

> Si je voy qu'on veüille laisser faire à mon Livre le bien qu'il es capable de produire; & qu'on ne me fasse pas l'injustice de me soupçonner de vouloir donner credit aux Sciences secretes, sous le pretexte de les tourner en ridicules; je continueray à me réjoüir de Monsieur le Comte & je pourray donner bien tost un autre Tome.[26]

This declaration dispels any remnant of the indeterminacy that is the essence of the Rosicrucian tales.

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[25] Le Comte de Gabalis, p 78.

[26] Le Comte de Gabalis, p.137.

In the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit we are never given an overt statement which could lead the reader to conclude that the author has predicted the audience response. The Confessio Fraternitatis protests the truth of the Fama Fraternitatis but this protestation is more like the claims of veracity we find in the Romantic frame story than the forthright invitation to literal interpretation found at the end of Le Comte de Gabalis. In this sense Le Comte de Gabalis is more like Eco's "Closed text" which we have discussed earlier, while the three Rosicrucian works, seen as a logical unit, have many of the qualities of the open text. The deliberately indeterminate nature of the Rosicrucian texts has aided in the expansion of the Rosicrucian discourse.

Rosicrucians and Illuminati

As we have mentioned previously, the Rosicrucian discourse gradually subsumed, at least in the popular imagination, many other secret and occult societies. One of the most influential groups to be associated with the Rosicrucians in literature, common parlance and even in library indexes is the secret society known as the Illuminati. This was an organization formed by Adam Weishaupt ca.

1776, which has often been connected to both the Freemasons and later Rosicrucian groups. Richard van Dülmen says of Weishaupt:

> Es war ein 28-jähriger Professor für Kirchenrecht und praktische Philosophie, der als Antwort auf die drohende allgemine "Verschwörung" gegen die Aufklärung (durch Jesuiten und die mit ihnen verbündeten Rosenkreuzer) im allgemeinen, wie zugleich zum Schutz vor eigener Isolierung und Anfeindung--im Jahre der amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitserklärung 1776--zusammen mit einigen wienigen Freunden und Studenten den Geheimbund der "Perfectibilisten" schuf, der bald in "Bund der Illuminaten" bzw. "Illuminatenorden" wurde.[27].

As we can see from this quotation, at least in their initial conception the Illuminati were not linked to the Rosicrucians. In 1785 the Illuminati were dissolved by the government of Bavaria. The Freemasons, although not originally associated with the outlawed Illumiati also suffered from public confusion about the relationship between the secret societies.

> Wohl keine geheime Verbindung des 18. Jahrhunderts hat die Freimauerei so geshädigt, wie diese. Obgleich die Illuminaten von Haus aus mit der Freimauerei gar nichts zu tun hatten, sondern ganz selbständig neben dieser wirkten und erst durch einen ihrer leidenschaftlichsten Apostel, den Freiherrn von Knigge, den Verfasser des berühmten Buches "Über den Umgang mit Menschen", mit Freimauren in nähere Verbindung gebracht wurde.[28]

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[27]Richard van Dülmen, Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten: Darstellung, Analyse, Dokumentation, Stuttgart: Fromann-Holzboog, 1975, p. 25

[28]Eugen Lennhoff, Die Freimaurer, Beyreuth: Gondrom,

Many indexes of subject material list the writings of von Knigge under both Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. The expansion of the definition of Rosicrucian and texts associated with the movement seems to be exponential, what is Illuminati is associated with Freemasonry and therefore with Rosicrucianism. For the same reason, many texts concerning Romantic Writers in France include Rosicrucianism in their index entries, although the true subject of their discussion is Illuminism. The Illuminist movement became popular under the influence of Emanuel Swedenborg (1678-1772). The ideas promulgated by the Illuminists, and therefore by association, the Rosicrucians became so pervasive that statements such as the following can be safely made:

> Baudelaire ne fut ni un illuminé, ni un illuministe au sens strict du terme. Par contre, il est établi que Baudelaire a fréquenté physiquement ou intellectuellement de nombreux penseurs illuministes, ou "imprégnés" d'idées illuministes...[29]

It does not seem appropriate in this context to search out the details of such a tenuous relationship to the Rosicrucian texts. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the ever widening circles of association.[30]

1981 rpt. of 1929 edition, p. 128.

[29]Anne-Marie Amiot, Baudelaire et Illuminisme, Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1982, p. 11.

[30]Since this section of this dissertation is devoted to Rosicrucian writings as they have influenced literature and social history, we will also dispense with a discussion of

Rosenkreuzerlegende

In 1931 the Swiss writer Albert Steffen (1884-1963) published a collection of novellas entitled Lebenswende. Included in this volume is Rosenkreuzerlegende,[31] an enigmatic short piece concerning an adventure of an apprentice on the island home of his teacher. One of his duties on this island is to dust off a skeleton, the remains of the holy man who had built the chapel on the island. One day a large, aggressive man lands on the island and cries that he will sacrifice his beloved daughter. The teacher flatly refuses to accept any sacrifice and the wild man throws a spear which narrowly misses the student. The force of his throw has knocked the stranger into the water, and the teacher and his pupil seek him in vain. In the visitors' ship the two

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less important texts as well as reworkings and editions of the original Rosicrucian texts. Also editions of Andreae's non Rosicrucian texts such as J. G. Herder's Joh. Val. Andreae: Dichtung zur Beherzigung unsers Zeitalter may remain for further investigations in this field.

[31]Albert Steffen, Rosenkreuzerlegende, in Albert Steffen: Ausgewälte Werke, vol. 2, Novellen Kleine Mythen, ed. Manfred Kruger, Dornach: Verlag für Schöne Wissenschaft, 1984, pp. 56-60.

find the daughter, who is terrified that she is to be sacrificed. They go to the graveyard near the chapel and find the stranger has climbed into an open grave in order to atone for his daughter's life. The master tells the wild stranger that the grave is not for him but for death, and the skeleton of the holy man is thrown into it, and all help fill the grave with earth.

In this short tale we may search in vain for elements of the original Rosicrucian tales. The only structural similarity is to the Chymische Hochzeit. However, the Rosenkreuzerlegende does not speak of alchemy, or of a secret brotherhood, or even of Christian Rosencreutz. It is a simple, mystic tale that is similar to Shelley's St. Irvyne in that it uses the name Rosicrucian without any direct reference to the three original tales. In the context of this dissertation the Rosenkreuzerlegende serves to demonstrate the way in which the Rosicrucian discourse has spread so thinly that any sort of mysticism may use the name.

Robert Anton Wilson

One of the most interesting and prolific modern authors who deal with the discourse surrounding the Rosicrucian texts is Robert Anton Wilson. Wilson has worked as an editor

for Hugh Hefner's Playboy empire. He has also co-authored at least one book with the notorious Dr. Timothy Leary. A quick inspection of Wilson's list of publications indicates that he has an overwhelming interest in occult societies, in particular the group he designates "Illuminati." Wilson's works include, The Illuminatus! Trilogy,[32] The Schrödingers Cat Trilogy,[33] and most recently, The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles.[34] All of these deal with the Rosicrucian discourse to some extent. However, since it is peripheral to The Schrödingers Cat Trilogy I have excluded these books from this discussion. The Illuminatus! Trilogy, which was Wilson's first work concerning the Illuminati, depends, in part, upon the Rosicrucian discourse. It was written in conjunction with Robert Shea, a fellow editor for Hefner's publishing empire. The Illuminatus! Trilogy is a complex con-

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[32]Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea, The Illuminatus! Trilogy, New York: Dell, 1975. This series is comprised of the three novels The Eye in the Pyramid, The Golden Apple, and Leviathan, and a series of appendixes which are named after the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

[33]Robert Anton Wilson, The Schrödingers Cat Trilogy, New York: Dell, 1979. The three texts that make up this trilogy are The Universe Next Door, The Trick Top Hat, and The Homing Pigeons.

[34]Robert Anton Wilson, The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles, New York: Lynx, Only two texts have been published in this series so far, The Earth Will Shake (1982), and The Widow's Son (1985) but the structure of the texts indicate that more will follow.

spiracy novel that incorporates literary techniques ranging from postmodernism to pornography.

The first book of The Illuminatus! Trilogy, The Eye in the Pyramid, deals with the initiation of a young reporter, George Dorn, into a society of Illuminati, and Dorn remains a major character throughout the subsequent two volumes of the trilogy. Hagbard Celine is the leader of the group that accepts Dorn. Celine travels around in a marvelous submarine like Captain Nemo in Verne's 2000 Leagues Under the Sea. This extensive, and at times confusing text is perhaps best summed up by the following quotation from Appendix Aleph:

> Most readers will assume that this book consists of nothing but fiction and fantasy; actually, like most historical tomes, it includes those elements (as do the works of Gibbon, Toynbee, Wells, Beard, Spengler, Marx, Yerby Kathleen Windsor, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, Moses, et. al.) but it also contains as many documented facts as do not conflict with the authors' prejudices.[35]

In the The Illuminatus! Trilogy there are few direct references to Rosicrucian discourse. There is the general impression that all secret societies are somehow linked, but the Rosicrucians are not in the forefront. For this reason, we will not provide a detailed analysis of this text but go on to discuss those of Wilson's novels which are more directly related to the Rosicrucian discourse.

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[35]The Illuminatus! Trilogy, p. 735.

Masks of the Illuminati

In Masks of the Illuminati Wilson links the Illuminati to the Order of the Golden Dawn, a British Rosicrucian group which included William Butler Yeats and Aliester Crowley among their membership. The Masks of the Illuminati relies heavily upon the modernist narrative techniques used by James Joyce in Ulysses and, in fact, includes Joyce as a character. The novel is centered around the adventures of Sir John Babcock, an impressionable young British nobleman who has become involved in the Golden Dawn Society. Babcock has aroused the interest of this group through his publications on medieval occult societies and receives an invitation to join from an apparently harmless middle class businessman named George Cecil Jones.

> Sir John's [Babcock] immediate response was a most cautious letter back to Mr. (George Cecil) Jones asking very tactfully just how much Mr. Jones actually knew of the surviving lodge of Cabalistic Freemasons in London, who alleged descent from the invisible college of the Rosy Cross (founded by the Sufi sage, Abramelin of Araby, and passed on to him through Abraham the Jew to Christian Rosencreutz, who lies buried in the Cave of the Illuminati, which was somewhere in the Alps according to Sir John's research...[36]

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[36]Robert Anton Wilson, Masks of the Illuminati, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981, p.29.

From a pamphlet which Jones has given him, Babcock learns that the Order of the Golden Dawn has split into two factions, with the evil aspects of ritual magic[37] represented by Alister Crowley's branch. The history of the Rosicrucian Society in this pamphlet and, for that matter, in the entire novel is not the same as represented in Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit. Babcock re-reads his copy of "The Alchemical Marriage of Christian Rosycross, with its strange medley of Christian and Egyptian allegorical figures..."[38] and later muses:

> Sir John found himself half-believing that he was dining with a member of the same Invisible college that published the first Rosicrucian pamphlets of 1619 and 1623.[39]

The Masks of the Illuminati is in the tradition of the original Rosicrucian texts, in that there is a cavalier attitude towards documentation of historical fact. Constant references are made to the original Rosicrucian texts, but the significance of these books is altered as much as the textual details. For example, there is an explicit reference

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[37]Magic is spelled with a "k" in this novel.

[38]Masks of the Illuminati, p.30.

[39]Masks of the Illuminati p. 35. These publication dates do not match those of the three German editions of the Rosicrucian texts. They also do not correspond to the publication dates of the first English translations of the Rosicrucian texts.

to the tomb of Christian Rosencreutz, which is described in the Fama Fraternitatis. Babcock is handed a small talisman by his mentor Jones that he finds difficult to see. When he asks Jones about the properties of this object, he is told "It is the vault [of Christian Rosycross]...it is an exact miniature..."[40] Wilson's precursor in the field of Rosicrucian fiction, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, is mentioned as an important source of Babcock's interest in the Rosicrucian Society. Babcock notes, quite correctly, that Bulwer-Lytton's works are more faithful to the traditions of esoteric fiction than those by other writers of the day:

> But most fascinating of all to Sir John, was the fact that the occult details in the book did not come from sheer fantasy and vulgar folklore, like the thrillers of Bram Stoker, but were derived from obviously genuine knowledge of medieval Cabala and Rosicrucianism.
>
> .....
>
> And Sir John, even more than the hundreds of thousands of readers who made Bulwer-Lytton one of the most popular novelists of the nineteenth century, was captivated by the question tantalizingly raised again and again in those books: If so much of the occult knowledge was based on real scholarship, might one dare to believe the frequent claim that the Rosy Cross order still existed and commanded the Vril force that could mutate humanity into superhumanity.[41]

The initial attraction provided by the indeterminate

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[40]Masks of the Illuminati, p. 210.

[41]Masks of the Illuminati, pp.26-27.

nature of the original three Rosicrucian texts is presented as an explicit cause of the popularity of Bulwer-Lytton's books. As in Wilson's text, an air of veracity is added by attention to the literary tradition of the Rosicrucian texts. Works like Shelley's St.Irvyne, which use the name but very little of the tradition of Rosicrucian writings, attract a far different audience.

One should not assume that, because there is an indeterminate air about Wilson's Masks of the Illuminati with regard to belief in secret societies, he lacks literary roots of a more conventional sort. Intertextuality with Joyce's Ulysses is present throughout the Masks of the Illuminati. For example, compare the following text with the opening passage of Ulysses:

> Stately, plump Albert Einstein came from the gloomdomed Lorelei barroom bearing a paleyellow tray on which two mugs of beer stood erect. Baggy trousers and an old green sweater, their colors darkshadowed in the candlelit Rathskeller, garbed carelessly his short gnomic, frame, yet his black hair was neatly combed, dandyish, and his black mustache jaunty.[42]
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> ==========
>
> Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing-gown, ungirdled, was sustained behind him by the morning air.[43]

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[42]Masks of the Illuminati p.11

[43]James Joyce, Ulysses, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, p.9

Joyce and Einstein as characters in this novel work together to overcome the terror that has been instilled in Babcock through his contact with, and indeed manipulation by, the Golden Dawn Society. Carl Gustav Jung, whose theories on archetypal images play an important role in the philosophical attitudes expressed in Masks of the Illuminati, also makes a brief, cameo appearance in the beginning of the novel. Jung's fascination with the recurring symbols that appear in occult images provides the basis for Wilson's understanding of the Rosicrucian text as a device for exploring the various modes of experiencing reality which are available to the human mind. For this reason, he also uses Einstein's theory of relativity as a model for the multiple modes of reality available to his characters. Like the original Rosicrucian texts, the Masks of the Illuminati applies contemporary science to the field of mysticism in order to pique the interest of its audience and maintain the possibility of more than one reading of the text.

The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles

In the first book of The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles, The Earth Will Shake, Robert Anton Wilson has

made a radical departure from the post-modernist style he employed in his earlier works. The structure of the text is that of a straightforward, realist narrative which presents the adventures of a young Neapolitan boy, Sigismundo Celine. This story begins in 1764 when one of Sigismundo's uncles is assassinated in church during Easter Mass. The boy discovers later that this assassination was carried out by a cabal of leftist peasants known as Rossi. Another of Sigismundo's uncles, Pietro, slowly begins his initiation into a lodge of Freemasons, who are pledged to combat the violent anarchy of the Rossi. Wilson has followed in Bulwer-Lytton's footsteps in setting his Rosicrucian novel in Naples. Sigismundo is a musician, like Bulwer-Lytton's heroine in Zanoni. Also, his characters travel around Europe during the course of the two novels of The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles. This setting is in contrast to the locations mentioned in the Fama Fraternitatis, i.e. the Middle East and Germany, although it is does not contradict the statements in the original Rosicrucian texts, which maintain that the brothers of the society founded by Christian Rosencreutz were to be found all over Europe.

In The Earth Will Shake, Wilson represents Europe in the seventeen hundreds as a hotbed of political strife fuelled by the efforts of numerous Freemasonic lodges in

every country. All lodges do not have the same goals and procedures.

> "This is all like Don Quixote rewritten by Machiavelli," Sigismundo protested. "Let me try and see if I follow There are Rossi, who were part of M.A.F.I.A. but aren't anymore. There are Carbonari, who do charitable works and teach spiritual enlightenment. There are also Alumbrados who pretend to be Carbonari but are actually more like Rossi."[44]

When a cousin of Sigismundo becomes mentally ill, Uncle Pietro takes him to see an old Jewish man, Abraham Orfali, who treats him by means of a procedure that the modern reader recognizes as hypnotism. Sigismundo recognizes Orfali as a member of the F.R.C. (Fraternitas Rosae Crucis), because he heals and cannot charge for the service. "Only the highest ranking Freemasons, it was said, could even apply for membership in the F.R.C."[45] Except for the mention of the Freemasons, the description of the Rosicrucian society provided by Sigismundo is completely consistent with the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis. As Sigismundo's initiation into his Uncle's Freemasonic-Rosicrucian group progresses, he discovers that meditation and knowledge of a complex system of multiple souls within the individual are the key to becoming an enlightened member

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[44]Robert Anton Wilson, The Earth Will Shake, New York: Lynx, 1988, p.32.

[45]The Earth Will Shake, p.69.

of the higher circles of this organization. The system of souls is quite similar to Freudian psychology and the healing provided is for psychosomatic illness. In the Rosicrucian system presented to Sigismundo there is a fourth soul which only higher adepts of the F.R.C. can access. When questioned about the goals of the Rosicrucians by Orfali, Sigismundo replies:

> "The medicine of metals, which changes all substances at the pleasure of the magician. And the stone of the wise, which some say is a code name for the Holy Grail. And the elixir of life, which gives longevity. And true wisdom and perfect happiness."
>
> Now suppose I tell you that all those are just different metaphors and symbols for the same thing?" Abraham smiled. "I wager you will be able to tell me at once what that thing is."
>
> "The fourth soul," Sigismundo said, quite certain. [46]

The above passage indicates a level of interpretation that should be applied to the Rosicrucian tradition. That is, the Rosicrucian texts should be seen as a metaphor for spiritual development. In this way The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles are unlike the three original Rosicrucian texts. In the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit there is no indication of how the wonders of the text should be interpreted. This indeterminacy has been the cause of the perennial interest

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[46] The Earth Will Shake, p.128.

in the three texts.

As in Zanoni there is also a love interest. Sigismundo admires Maria Malatesta from a distance. She eventually marries a fellow Mason from England whose name is John Babcock. This character is the ancestor of the James Babcock, the protagonist of The Masks of the Illuminati. In fact, as we have mentioned earlier, a descendant of Sigismundo, Hagbard Celine, appears in The Illuminatus Trilogy. Wilson uses this technique of elaborating upon characters and their history in order to provide the reader with the impression of a tightly knit textual reality, much as the original three Rosicrucian texts used images and characters. For example, the brother C.R. of the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis is developed into a tangible character by the first person narrative in the Chymische Hochzeit.

The second book in the The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles, The Widow's Son, derives its name from the Biblical passage from I Kings mentioned above which has become so significant to the Freemasons. However, there is some indication in the text that Wilson uses the phrase with the greater significance implied in the work of pseudo-history entitled The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail.[47] That is, the

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[47]Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.

notion that Jesus Christ physically survived the crucifixion and his descendants are referred to by this phrase:

> "Who is the bridegroom in the Alchemical Marriage of Christian Rosycross?"
>
> "It can only be Christ himself. Of course. The best place to hide something is right out in the open, because nobody looks there."
>
> "And the bride? The widow after the crucifixion?"
>
> "It can only be Mary Magdalene."
>
> "And the widow's son--the one who survived the crucifixion and brought the gnosis to Europe?"
>
> "Their son. Merovée. The first Merovingian. My [Sigismundo] Ancestor. No wonder historians are confused and say that he was more priest than king."
>
> "The legend that he was half-fish means...?"
>
> "It is a code. The fish is a symbol of Christ."[48]The Widow's Son[2] ●ü▬●», p.335. »

This is a completely novel interpretation of the text of the Chymische Hochzeit; neither fiction nor fact but rather an encoded parable about the true nature of Christianity. In The Widow's Son Wilson also puts forth the notion that Johann Valentin Andreae was of Merovigian descent and therefore related to Christ. The Freemasonic statement that a good deed was done "for the widow's son" takes on a whole new meaning. In one sense, this re-interpretation of the Rosicrucian texts is a radical departure from their tradition. On the level of a textual device, however, Wilson has remained within the Rosicrucian tradi-

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tion. The original three texts did not break new ground with their claim of a mystic society based upon knowledge of the Orient. They took the tales told by believing alchemists as well as charlatans and founded a fictional discourse. In essence, Wilson has done the same. The fantastic tale of pseudo-history has served as the foundation of a work of fiction. Wilson has modified his literary style by adding copious notes which refer to a battle of scholars over the "facts" reported in the main story line. These notes are printed after the paragraph to which they refer and serve to destroy any attempt to read the text in a strictly linear fashion. They often refer to a Monsieur Gérard de Sède, the author of several popular novels on Rosicrucian and related topics.[49] This constant mention of the "scholarly" debate in notes is actually a parody of the structure of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail. Like the author(s) of the three original Rosicrucian works, Wilson has included parody of serious texts in his novel. The greatest difference is that the extra-textual clues provided to Wilson's audience almost totally exclude the interpretation of his works as fact. The inclusion of psychology and drug culture in his corpus of

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[49]Some of de Sède's publications are: L'Or de Rennes (1967); La Race fabuleuse (1973); Signé: Rose + Croix (1977); Les Templiers sont parmi nous (1976); Le Vrai Dossier de l'énigme de Rennes (1975).

fiction allow for his Illuminati based works to be seen, in one sense, as teaching tales, but there is no chance the reader will believe in the great conspiracy he depicts. Perhaps this is what the author(s) of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit had in mind also.

Rosicrucian Texts as Fact

During the period in which Europe was flooded with letters and publications from the earnest as well as dishonest who wished to join the Rosicrucian society (after the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis) one of the most significant writers of the seventeenth century who appeared to believe in the existence of the Rosicrucians was Michael Maier (1568-1622). This physician and alchemist was born in Holstein (now part of Germany) and traveled to England around the time of the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis. Although there is some speculation that Maier may have been involved in the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis, A.E. Waite says:

> It seems quite certain that Michael Maier was not ab origine symboli connected with the Order [Rosicrucians] and was in any case not one of the hypothetical theosophists who put forth its first manifesto to learn the judgment of Europe thereupon. We shall see in due course that his entrance into the debate is posterior to the chief

> official publications...and is sufficiently late to present a silent but eloquent commentary on certain reveries which suppose that he visited England as if carrying a commission to spread knowledge concerning the Rosy Cross and its claims.[50]

As indicated by the above quotation, Maier did not publish on the topic of the Rosicrucian debate until 1617. The Latin text Silentium Post Clamores was a defense of the Rosicrucians who refused to reveal themselves to the host of would be mystics who wrote open replies to the Fama Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit asking to be accepted into the Rosicrucian brotherhood.[51] In this text Maier denies that he is in any way connected to the Rosicrucians in this text and then proceeds to attempt to explain away all of the inconsistencies that exist between the claims of the Fama Fraternitatis and those of the Confessio Fraternitatis. The next year Maier published the Themis Aurea, which continued his discussion of the Rosicrucians. This text, however, was written from the viewpoint of an initiate into the brother-

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[50]Arthur Edward Waite, The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross: Being the Records of the House of the Holy Spirit in its inward and Outward History, London: William Rider & Son, 1924, p. 313.

[51]Michael Maier, Silentium Post Clamores, Hoc Est, Tractatus Apologeticus, Quo causae non solum clamorum seu Revelationum Fraternitatis Germanicae de R. C. sed & Silentii, seu non redditae ad singulorum vota responsionis, una cum malevolorum refutatione, traduntur & demonstrantur, scriptus Authore Michaele Maireo Imperialis Consistorij Comite, Eq. Ex. Phil. & Med. D. Frankfurt: Jenner, 1617.

hood.[52] This raises the interesting question; had a society of practicing Rosicrucians already formed itself and initiated Michael Maier into their fold, or had Maier simply decided to take up the Rosicrucian discourse and contribute his own notions of the mythical brotherhood?

The next "serious" Rosicrucian we will deal with in this discussion is Thomas Vaughan, the twin brother of the famous metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan. The brothers were born in Wales in 1621, and spoke Welsh as well as English in their home. From 1632 until 1638 Thomas attended Oxford and apparently developed his taste for esoteric literature there. After graduation he was installed as Rector of the Welsh town of Llansanffraid. It is reported that he died from the inhalation of mercury vapors while preforming an alchemical experiment.

Thomas Vaughan not only wrote his own works on the subject of alchemy, but also published texts on mystic topics by other authors. One of these was the anonymous English translation of the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis, which appeared in 1653. In the lengthy preface to The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of

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[52]Michael Maier, Themis Aurea, hoc est, de Legibus Fraternitatis R.C.; Quo Earum Cum Rei Veritate Convenientia, utilitas publica & privata, nec non causa necessaria; evoluuntur & demonstrantur., Frankfurt: Jennis, 1618.

R.C., Vaughan admits that some of his readers may place the text in the same class as Don Quixote, that is, fiction.[53] Although, like Michael Maier in Silentium Post Clamores, he does not claim to be a member of the fraternity of Rosicrucians, he attempts to explain the wonders described in the text as if they were to be taken literally:

> Thus Reader have I endeavor'd to produce some Reasons for those strange Effects, whereof this Society [Rosicrucian] hath made a public Profession. I did it not as a Kindness to them, for I pen no Plots, neither do I have their Familiarity. I am indeed of the same Faith with them, and I have thus prefac'd, because I had the Impudence to think it concern'd me as much as them. And verily it is true, that wheresoever I meet my own Positions, there have I an Interest, and as much bound to the Defense of that Author, as I am to my own.[54]

Vaughan obviously accepts the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis as alchemical textbooks and proceeds from that point. There is no hint that he was aware of the ambiguous nature of the texts. In his introduction he even gives the readers hints as to the alchemical tech-

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[53]Thomas Vaughan, The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R.C. Commonly of the Rosie Cross With a Preface Annexed thereto, and a Short Declaration of their Physicall Work London: for Giles Calvert, 1653. Vaughan signed his preface Eugenius Philalethes, the name he used for his esoteric publications.

[54]Preface to the Fame and Confession as it appears in The Works of Thomas Vaughan ed. by Alan Rudrum, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p.505.

nicalities alluded to in the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis. This literal acceptance of the existence of a Rosicrucian society by a prominent English writer influenced the development of the Rosicrucian discourse in the English speaking world. In our own time we find respectable writers like Francis Yates proposing that the Rosicrucian society actually existed before the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis.

From 1887 until 1923 there existed in England The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which had an inner order of the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold. There was before this an association of Master Masons [Freemasons] called Societas Rosicrucian in Anglia, to which the founding members of the Golden Dawn belonged, but:

> The Soc. Ros. [Societas Rosicrucian in Anglia] was 'Rosicrucian' only in name since its members clearly knew very little about the origins of the Rosicrucian legend in Germany at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their ignorance was hardly surprising because the first serious studies by German scholars were not published until after 1920.[55]

The founding members of the Golden Dawn intended, with the use of some coded documents of suspect origin, to bring true Rosicrucianism to England. The Society started with Dr.

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[55]Ellic Howe, The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887-1923, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 26.

William Wynn Westcott and Samuel Liddel MacGregor Mathers. Other famous members were A.E. Waite, author of numerous occult texts as well as editor of a collection of the works of Thomas Vaughan, and W.B. Yeats. The Golden Dawn society, as well as some of its members, appear often in the fiction of Robert Anton Wilson. Many of the members of the Golden Dawn read and admired greatly the works of Bulwer-Lytton. It would appear that there exists a dialectic relationship between those who accepted the Rosicrucian texts as fiction and those who accepted them as fact.

In 1982 Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln published The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, which was based upon the research done by the authors for a British Broadcasting Corporation program. The substance of the argument of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail is that the Knights Templar and the secret societies which succeeded them after the dissolution of the order by the Catholic Church at the behest of the king of France have been hiding the secret that Christ did not die on the cross and that his descendants are alive today in Europe. As mentioned previously, The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail has a complex and often irritating mechanism of endnotes which often add little to the discussion at hand. One assumes that they are there to give the illusion of credibility to an otherwise

tenuous argument. Despite, or perhaps, because of the obvious deficiencies of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, the book gained immense popularity and has spawned a sequel, i.e. The Messianic Legacy by the same authors.[56] The Rosicrucian society is an important link in this chain of secret societies presented in The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail and the way in which Robert Anton Wilson has used the basic premise of these texts has been amply described. Let it suffice to say here that these two texts demonstrate the power that conspiracy theories and tales of mysterious societies still hold over audiences in today's scientific world.

In this last, short section I have attempted to restrict my discussion to the major proponents of the Rosicrucian texts interpreted as fact. I have not considered the modern Rosicrucian society based in California, nor dealt with the work of Rudolph Steiner, a Swiss who influenced many with his revival of a 'real" Rosicrucian society. Perhaps the most serious omission of this section is that of the Freemasons. It is through this society that many great writers in England and continental Europe became acquainted with the myth which has sprung up around the

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[56]Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln The Messianic Legacy, London: Corgi, 1988.

three original Rosicrucian texts. The Freemasons have been the fountainhead of occult societies that have, for centuries, taken the Rosicrucian material to heart. Eugen Lennhoff says of the Freemason-Rosicrucian connection:

> Eines ist sicher unbedingt richtig: viele der freimaurerischen Symbole weisen zweifelsohne auf rosenkreuzerischen, pansophischen Ursprung hin. Anderseits scheint das neuerdings (von Dr. Bernhard Beyer-Bayreuth veröffentlichte Rituale der (späteren) "Gold und Rosenkreuzer" darauf hinzuweisen, daß in mancher Hinsicht die Maurer der gebende Teil gewesen sind.[57]

The Bavarian Illuminati were founded by Adam Weishaupt, who was also a member of the Freemasons. Goethe first became interested in the work of Johann Valentin Andreae through his Masonic Lodge. He even went so far as to re-write one of the poems in the Chymische Hochzeit so that it scanned as well as rhymed, and it has been suggested that he was also a member of the Illuminati. The wealth of information on these ostensibly secret societies demonstrates the important part they play in literature as well as political life. One could write an entire dissertation on the effects produced by secret societies directly or indirectly linked with the Rosicrucian. However, it is the principle of the development of the Rosicrucian myth/discourse we wish to lay bare.

From the indeterminate structure of the Fama Frater-

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[57] Die Freimaurer, p.65.

nitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis the more literary and allegorical Chymische Hochzeit was born. All three texts were perceived as a unit by readers, both contemporary and those of later generations, a fact which increased the possibility of multiple interpretation. Later writers of fiction were able to maintain this sort of structure, aided and abetted by the existence of writers and societies which accepted the Rosicrucian texts as real. The key to the phenomenon must be the fact that at any given time in the history of the works there is no one definitive Rosicrucian myth. It is a composite created of the multiple perspectives made possible by the structure of the three original texts.

Conclusion

In this study of the three original Rosicrucian texts it has been demonstrated that works which are not usually considered to belong to the canon of "great literature" can have a wide ranging and lasting effect. There is a pervasive attitude in the scholarly community that texts which are not immediately recognizable by their literary merit are best forgotten. If texts like the Fama Fraternitatis, and the Confessio Fraternitatis are to be investigated at all, it is the task of historians who wish to study the popular literature of the seventeenth century. The Chymische Hochzeit has, of course, enough of the abstract quality which we may term "literary merit" to deserve some attention as the work of a "minor writer." Despite this tendency to condemn the study of marginal literary phenomena like the Rosicrucian texts, it is hoped that this study has shown that such dismissal is not only unjustified but also shortsighted.

The contemporary interest aroused by the Fama Fraternitatis was sufficient to set in motion a chain of events, literary, social and to some extent political. The term "political" must be included because of the suspicion that Rosicrucian, Freemasonic and Illuminati organizations have often taken an active role in the politics of several

countries. This dissertation has attempted to present some of the reasons the Rosicrucian texts have had such far reaching effect as well as giving an account of some of the major examples.

In the first chapter of this dissertation the historical situation surrounding the publication of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit was presented in order that the reader could place the texts in their appropriate social and literary context. The question of authorship was dealt with, although the time and attention devoted to this problem was less than that dedicated to ad hominem arguments by other writers on the topic. The reason for this deviation from accepted practice is that the effect of the Rosicrucian texts is more important to this discussion than the reason for their creation. Even if one were able to discover the "true" intentions of the author(s) of the three original Rosicrucian texts, such information would be only peripherally relevant to the question at hand.

Our second chapter is intended to present, in more detail, the theoretical basis of this study. Eco's theories concerning the role of the reader in the reception of texts are applied to the Rosicrucian texts. This does not mean that each individual book is analyzed as a unit. This study seeks to see the three texts as a single creation which

allowed, by means of sequential publication, the audience of the seventeenth century to take part in the final result. This approach to the texts allows us to reveal the most important element of our discussion. That is, the three original Rosicrucian texts have had such a great effect because the author(s), either deliberately or by accident, were able to make them open to multiple interpretations. Because the texts contain signals which the reader, in any time, may interpret in many ways, the audiences have created several Rosicrucian traditions.

The chapter of this dissertation devoted to an analysis of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit as examples of "fantastic literature" is not intended to leave the reader convinced that there is only one way of seeing these books. This chapter demonstrates that the rules used by some modern scholars to delineate this genre may be applied successfully to the Rosicrucian texts. There has been a tradition of readers who perceive the Rosicrucian texts in this way since their publication.

For the same reason, our chapter on the relationship of the Rosicrucian texts to the modern definition of the genre of science fiction is intended to demonstrate the applicability of these terms. Nevertheless, the Rosicrucian works should not be considered an early example of science fic-

tion. They simply contain elements of that genre.

The fifth chapter is intended to show that the strength of the Rosicrucian texts lies, in part, in their ability to create a tradition for themselves. Because they are open to multiple interpretations that have interested a broad range of audience and this audience has worked at the spread of their own interpretations of the text, the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, and the Chymische Hochzeit have spread their influence far beyond the area possible if they had only directly influenced readers and writers. The group that accepts the Rosicrucian texts as true accounts of a mystic society have created Rosicrucian brotherhoods in their desire to make them real. Writers of fiction have seized upon the fantastic elements of the Rosicrucian books and created fiction which follows in their path. Those who wish to see the Rosicrucian texts as religious allegory have elaborated on the theological implications of the texts. Each group favors one or more of the three texts but all must admit that their true effect is based upon the audience perception of all three as a unit.

The last chapter of this study is an attempt to demonstrate the far ranging effects of the Rosicrucian texts through a small selection of the related literature. The exponential expansion of the term "Rosicrucian" has had the effect of providing widely different representations of the

Rosicrucians in several types of text. There are false histories using the term Rosicrucian as well as Gothic novels and modern works of historical fiction. Groups of serious men and women regularly meet in order to practice what they call Rosicrucianism.

In the course of this discussion of the three original Rosicrucian texts and their followers it is hoped that the reader has been able to obtain a clearer perspective on the nature of these works. It has become obvious that their particular charm is their ability to be many things to many men. That is, the indeterminate structure of the texts has enabled them to be used as the basis for elaboration, both textual and social. We cannot hope to ascertain the "true" intentions of the author(s) because it is possible that such intentions never existed. The success of the Fama Fraternitatis inspired an exercise in manipulation of media and popular opinion that has had a lasting effect.

Not only have we gained some insight into the nature of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit, we have also come closer to an understanding of the mechanism of the reception of texts with mixed codes. Others have dealt with the problems entailed in misinterpretation of "closed texts," but in this dissertation we have delved into deliberate manipulation of the reader's response so as to produce mixed reactions. Not only this, we

have also begun to explore the way in which serialized texts are accepted by their audience.

It is hoped that this study of the Fama Fraternitatis , the Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit has provided incentive for the study of other works which have long been consigned to the literary "scrapheap." Literary merit and the effect upon literature are not one and the same thing. In fact, from this study of the Rosicrucian texts it has become apparent that the child is often greater than the father. Those who have written on the theme of Rosicrucians and Rosicrucianism as well as those who practice "speculative alchemy" have had a much greater effect upon the world than one would expect if the three original Rosicrucian texts were studied in isolation.

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Appendix

In the preceding chapters we have seen that the Rosicrucian texts may be interpreted in various ways. Because of the external as well as the internal clues to interpretation which are presented to the reader, the Fama Fraternitatis, the Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chymische Hochzeit have been historically accepted in various genres. In this section of our discussion we will give textual examples which illustrate the ways in which these texts may be read. In order to accomplish this goal sections of the text which are particularly relevant will be presented in conjunction with several possible readings. The comments in the right hand column supplement and give precision to the points already made in previous chapters.

Section 1: Fama Fraternitatis

The section of the Fama Fraternitatis that is quoted below (pp. 24-26) relates the discovery of Brother C.R.'s tomb by the Rosicrucians after it had remained hidden for over 100 years. It demonstrates clearly the indeterminate nature of the entire text.

...des morgens öffneten wir die Thür und befand sich	This section of the text is open to interpretation as either fantasy or an early form of science

ein Gewölb von sieben seyten und ecken und jede seyten von fünff schuen, die höhe 8. schue, dieses Gewölb, ob es wohl von der Sonnen niemahls bescheinet wurde, leuchtet es doch helle von einer andern, so dieses der Sonnen Abgelernet und stund zu öberst in dem Centro der Bühnen, in der mitten war an statt eines Grabsteins ein runter Altar überlegt, mit einem mässinen Blätlein, darauff diese Schrift:

A.C.R.C. HOC UNIVERSI COMPENDIUM VIVUS MIHI SEPHULCHRUM FECI.

Umb den ersten Reiff oder Rand herumb stund:

JESUS MIHI OMNIA,

In der mitten sein 4. Figuren im cirkel eingeschlossen, deren Umbschrift sein:

1. NEQUAQUAM VACUUM,
2. LEGIS JUGUM,
3. LIBERTAS EVANGELII,

fiction. If we accept the lighting that has lasted for over one hundred years as a technical impossibility then the indication is of fantasy. If it is a technological marvel then we have science fiction. The modern reader is prejudiced towards the latter interpretation because of modern lighting but the seventeenth century reader would have no such predisposition and be reminded of the miraculous or marvelous.

The dimensions and shape of the tomb suggest esoteric symbolism and may be placed within the masonic tradition as well as Jewish and Christian lore.

This means literally "This compendium of the universe I made in my lifetime to be my tomb."

These Latin inscriptions are cryptic and rife with unexplained abbreviations.

"Jesus is all things to me."

They add to the indeterminate nature of the text because they can be (and have been) interpreted in several fashions according to the general view of the interpreter.

"(1)A vacuum exists nowhere. (2)The yoke of the law. (3)The liberty of the gospel. (4)The whole glory of God."

4. DEI GLORIA INTACTA.

Diß ist alles klahr und lauter, wie auch die siebende seyten und die zween siebende Triangel.

Also knieten wihr allezumahl nieder und danckten dem allein Weysen, allein Mächtigen, allein Ewigen Gott, der uns mehr gelehret, denn alle Menschliche Vernunft köndte erfinden, gelobet sey sein Name:

Dieses Gewölb theileten wir ab in drey theile, die Böhne oder Himmer diß mahl von uns nicht mehr vernehmen, ohn daß er nach den sieben seyten in den lichten Centro im Triangel getheilet (was aber hierinnen, sollen (ob Gott wil) viel ehe ewere (die ihr Heyls erwarten) Augen selbst sehen), sein jede in 10. gevierdte spacia abgetheilet, jede mit seinen

The footnote in Richard van Dülmen's edition of this text (p. 25) sums up an unprejudiced reaction to these inscriptions: "Sinn unklar."

This pause for prayer could lead the reader to begin to interpret the events described in the Fama Fraternitatis as a religiously based fantasy because it attributes more to God than to human understanding.

This detailed description of the tomb of Brother C.R. leaves room for multiple interpretations. The geometry suggests a mystic or even mechanical significance. Consider the import that modern mystic and pseudo-scientific groups have placed upon the pyramid shape. One could accept that the geometry of the tomb has either an allegorical or physical significance depending upon ones' predispositions.

Next we have the suggestion of greater secrets that have not been revealed as well as the promise that to those who join the society all will be revealed. The triangle has long had mystic significance and in Christian context may refer to the Holy Trinity.

figuren und sententien, wie die allhier in unserm Büchlein Concentratum auffs fleissigste und trewlichste abgerissen, beygelegt, der Boden ist auch wiederumb im Triangel abgetheilet, aber weil hierinnen des undern Regenten Herrschafft und Gewalt beschrieben, lest sich solches nicht der fürwitzigen gottlosen Welt zum mißbrauch prostituieren, was sich aber mit dem Himmlischen auditu verstehet, tritt der alten bösen Schlangen ohne schew und schaden auff den Kopff, darzu sich unser seculum gar wohl schicket.

Genesis, 3, 15. "And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Ein jede der seyten hatte eine Thür zu einem Kasten, darinnen unterschiedliche sachen lagen, besonders alle unsere Bücher, so wihr sonsten auch hatten, sampt deme Vocabulario Theoph. P. ab: Ho. und denen so wihr

This description of the wonders in the storage boxes in C.R.'s tomb, however, would seem to conterbalance the religious implications of the previous statement. Here we have clear similarities to secret societies or science fiction.

This is, of course, Theophrastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim, the legendary

täglich ohne falsch mittheilen: Hierinn funden wihr auch sein Itinerarium und Vitam, darauß dieses meisten theils genommen: In einem anderen Kasten waren Spiegel von mancherley Thugend, also anderstwo Glöcklein, brennende Ampeln, sonderlich etliche wunder künstliche Gesänge, in gemein alles dahin gerichtet, daß auch nach viel 100. Jahren, da der gantze Orden oder Brüderschafft solte zu grund gehen, selber durch solch eynig Gewölb wiederumb zu restituiren were:

alchemist of the sixteenth century. By calling on his famous name the narrative is taken out of the realm of religion into that of secular wonders. Paracelcus is an important reference key not only to the seventeenth century audience, but also to all subsequent groups of readers. The legends surrounding his name are equally applicable to fantasy and to science fiction.

It is interesting that this "time capsule" is filled with wonders that would enable the reconstitution of the Rosicrucian brotherhood if it were to be lost after centuries. This image of the rebuilding of a technology from the preserved remnants of an earlier time is very common in science fiction. However, to those who would accept the Rosicrucian tales as factual, this is a promise of wonders yet to come. If seen in the light of a tale of fantasy, these items would not be technological artifacts, they would be exotic wonders. Mirrors, bells and burning lamps may suggest magic to the modern reader but in the seventeenth century the sciences of optics and acoustics were in their infancy. These could refer to experimental tools as well as cabalistic trappings.

Noch hatten wir den Leichnam unsers sorgfeltigen und klugen Vatters nicht gesehen, rückten derowegen

The significance of Brother R.C.'s uncorrupted corpse is again a matter of interpretation. The religious audience can see it as a saintly miracle and the more technically inclined could interpret it

den Altar beseits, da ließ sich eine starcke Mässingen Blatten auffheben und befand sich ein schöner und ruhmwürdiger Leib, unversehret und ohne alle verwesung, wie derselbe hierbey auffs ennlichste mit allem ornat und angelegten stücken, Conterfeth zusehen, in der Hand hielt er ein Büchlein auff Bergament mit Goldt geschrieben, so T. genandt, welches numehr nach der Bibel unser höchster Schatz und billich nicht leichtlich der Welt censur soll unterworffen werden: Zu ende dieses Büchleins stehet folgendes Elogium:

as the effects of the marvelous tomb. Either interpretation is valid and places an entirely different sense of meaning on the text as a whole.

There is no indication as to what the book called "T." contains or as to what the title refers. Van Dülmen suggests Testamentum or Thesaurus. (note p. 26)

The elegy at the end of the book is actually a short Latin summary of the plot of the Fama Fraternitatis thus far.

Section 2: Confessio Fraternitatis

The Confessio Fraternitatis is somewhat different from the Fama Fraternitatis with respect to the inherent ambiguity of the text. Unlike the Fama Fraternitatis or the

Chymische Hochzeit the Confessio Fraternitatis is not an independent text which may be read without knowledge of the other two Rosicrucian books. It is first and foremost an embroidering upon the myth created in the Fama Fraternitatis and as such, it depends heavily upon the earlier text for its effect. The Chymische Hochzeit breaks away from the pamphlet like style of the two earlier Rosicrucian texts and therefore gains freedom from the slavish reiteration of the Fama Fraternitatis that we find in the Confessio Fraternitatis. With these limitations in mind, this section of our discussion will present a quotation from the Confessio Fraternitatis (pp. 34-35) that adds to the ambiguity of the series as a whole.

Was nun das erste Stück belangt, von demselben halten wir also, daß die Meditationes, Erkundigungen unsers geliebten Christlichen Vaters über alle das jenige, so von Anfang der Welt her von Menschlichem Verstandt entweder durch Götliche Revelation und Offenbahrung oder durch der Engel und Geister Dienst oder durch

It is interesting that this text includes in the meditations and knowledge of brother C.R. both revealed knowledge as well as a rather explicit description of the acquisition of knowledge by human reason. That is, not only hypotheis, but also that which has been discovered by experimentation and observation. This clear distinction of the two epistemological forms leads the reader to wonder whether the Rosicrucian brotherhood is concerned with the mystic or what we would consider scientific method. Opting for one or the other would lead the reader to accept the Confessio Fraternitatis, and by consequence, the

Scharffsinnigkeit deß Verstands oder durch langwirige Observation, Übung und Erfahrung erfunden, erdacht, herfürgebracht, verbessert und biß hieher propagiret oder fortgepflantzet worden, so fürtrefflich, herrlichund groß seyn, das ob schon alle Bücher solten umbkommen und durch deß Allmächtigen Gottes Verhengnuß aller Schriften et totius rei literariae interitus oder Untergang fürgehen solte, die Posteritet dennoch auß denselben allein newes Fundament legen und ein newes Schoß oder Feste der Wahrheit wieder auffbawen köndte, welches denn auch vielleicht nicht so schwer sein möchte, als daß man erst soll anfangen, das alte so unformliche Gebäw zu destruiren und zu verlassen und bald den Vorhoff

Fama Fraternitatis and Chymische Hochzeit as either technolgical fiction (science fiction) fantasy (fantastic literature) or documentation of a religious fraternity or even an alchemical research group.

This is a reiteration with incrementation of the claim made in the section that we quoted from the Fama Fraternitatis. In that text it was suggested that the whole Rosicrucian society could be rebuilt from the knowledge contained in Brother C.R.'s tomb. Here the claim is that all of human knowledge could be rebuilt upon the foundation of C.R.'s knowledge. Therefore, it would seem that the author(s) of the Confessio Fraternitatis are claiming that their society has some sort of super science that comprehends all other forms of knowledge. This is of course, fascinating to those who would read the Rosicrucian texts as fact. The scientist, and therefore the science fiction reader has always longed for one type of knowledge that would unlock the secrets of the world. The suggestion is that the new "science" of Rosicrucianism would be more efficient than the old form.

erweitern, bald den Tag in die Gemacht bringen, die Thüren, Stegen und anders, wie unser Intention solches mitbringet, verendern.

Wem wolte nun aber dieses nicht annemlich seyn, da es nur männiglich kund werden möchte und nicht viel mehr als ein besondere Zier für die bestimmpte künfftige Zeit behalten und gesparet würde?

Warimb wolten wir nicht in der einigen Wahrheit (welche die Menschen durch so viel Irrwege und krumme Strassen suchen) hertzlich gerne rhuen und bleiben, wenn es allein Gott gefallen hette, das sechste Candalabrum[2] uns anzuzünden?

The question of why not make esoteric knowledge public is basic to the framework of tales of secret societies. In Heinlein's Methuselah's Children[1] the secret of immortality is good breeding. That is, it is an inherited trait and cannot be given to others.

The lament is that it would be wonderful if only the great knowledge of the Rosicrucians could be revealed. What better way to arouse the interest of all audiences. What follows is a subjunctive listing of all of the wonders that the Rosicrucians could provide. This suggestive list of marvels is the source for much of the speculation by other writers on the nature of the Rosicrucians. It infers marvels without actually stating that these

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[1]See our chapter on science fiction for a discussion of the parallels between Heinlein's text and the Rosicrucian tales.

[2]Revelations, Chapter 1, verses 12 to 20 use the metaphor of seven golden candlesticks to represent seven churches. Van Dülmen (note p. 35) suggests this is the source of the Candelabrum in the text but there is no explicit explanation of the reference.

Were es nicht gut, daß man sich weder für Hunger noch Armut, weder für Kranckheit noch Alter zu besorgen und zu befahren hette?

Wehre es nicht ein köstlich Ding, daß du köndtest alle Stunde also leben, als wenn du von Anfang der Welt bißher gelebet hettest, und noch ferner biß ans Ende derselben leben soltest?

Wehre es nicht herrlich, daß du an einem Ort also wohnen köndtest, daß weder die Völcker so über dem Fluß Ganges in India wohnen, ihre Sachen für dir verbergen, noch die, so in Peru leben, ihre Rathschlege dir verhalten köndten?

Wehre es nicht ein köstlich Ding, daß du also

are the secrets held in trust by the followers of Brother C.R.

Here is the oblique suggestion that has led to speculation that the Rosicrucians hold forth the promise of immortality to their prospective members. However, since the deaths of Brother C.R. and his followers are explicitly mentioned in the Fama Fraternitatis it is inconsistent with the bulk of the series. The statement could be interpreted to mean only that the Rosicrucian has peace of mind and does not fear death.

Long distance communication is common in both science fiction and in fantasy. The former uses scientific explanation and the latter mystic powers. Again, the reader should note that it is suggested rather than directly stated that this is a power that could be granted.

Here we have the notion of the universal library. One book that com-

lesen kündtest in einem Buch, daß du zugleich alles, was in allen Büchern, die jemals gewesen, noch seyen oder kommen und außgehen werden, zu finden gewesen, noch gefunden werden, lesen verstehen und behalten möchtest?

prehends all known and possible knowledge. The modern concept of the Hypertext is similar to this. That is, an electronic text that allows one to cross-refer to any other text by simply selecting the term that interests one. This is again a subjunctive suggestion that hints but does not promise.

The reader of the Confessio Fraternitatis is plied with hints about the Rosicrucians as well as firm pronouncements of their religious affiliation to the Protestant faith. This text helps to create the atmosphere of interest in the Rosicrucian society that led Andreae to publish his Chymische Hochzeit.

Section 3: Chymische Hochzeit

The Chymische Hochzeit is much more suggestive than either the Fama Fraternitatis or the Confessio Fraternitatis. Taken alone, it could have inspired almost as much interest in the Rosicrucian society as the other two combined. When added to the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio Fraternitatis, the Chymische Hochzeit provides the

reader with a multiplicity of possibilities for interpretation. It is our contention that this openness to interpretation is the foundation of the long lasting success of the Rosicrucian myth, even if interest in the three original texts is not as strong as it was in the seventeenth century. The quotation that follows (pp. 114-115) represents the culmination of the alchemical process of the re-creation of the king and queen.

Darnach setzten wir die Materi uber das Fewr, biß sie wol heiß wurde. Von dannen gossen wir sie also heiß in zwey kleine Förmlin und Mödelen, und liessens also ein wenig erkülen...Wir eröffneten die Förmlin, da waren es zwey schöne helle, und und schier durch scheinende Bildlin, dergleichen Menschen Augen niemalen gesehen, ein Knäblen und Meydlin: Jedes nur vier zol lang und daß mich am höchsten wundert, waren sie nit hart, sondern

The technical description of the production of the two minuscule figures is in the tradition of science fiction. Mary Shelley's description of the creation of Dr. Frankenstein's monster is the most well known example.

This example shows how long the desire to create life by technical, rather than biological, means has been a topic for literary speculation. The two figures are compared to the figure of Venus that Christian Rosencreutz sees earlier in the novel. This would suggest to the reader that the pagan goddess is the production of similar technology/magic. The interpretation of the significance of these figures is left up to the reader. If he is predisposed towards magic then this is a miracle, if science then it is an adumbrated description of a complex procedure.

weich und Fleischin, wie ein anderer Mensch, doch hatten sie kein Leben, daß ich also gäntzlich glaube, Fraw Venus Bilde werde auch auff solche Art gemachet worden sein.

Diese Engelschöne Kindlein legeten wir erstlich auff zwey Atlasin Küßelein und besahens ein gute weil, daß wir schier uber solchem zierlichen spectacul zu Lappen wurden. Der Alte Herr wehret uns ab und befahl immer ein Tröpfflein nach dem andern, von deß Vogels Blut, so in das Guldin Schälein auffgefangen worden in der Bildlin Mund fallen zulassen, davon namen sie augenscheinlich zu, und da sie zuvor schon klein gewesen waren, sie jetzt der Proportz nach noch schöner, das billich alle Mahler hie hätten sollen sein, und sich

The remarkable effect of the Phoenix's blood upon these two figures has classical implications. The bird that is renowned for its rebirth is seen to lend its powers to the re-creation of the king and queen. Despite this allusion, we shall see in the next section of this quotation that the infusion of blood is not enough to turn lifeless, artificial bodies into living, breathing human beings. All that is accomplished is that the figures are increased to human size. Andreae emphasizes the comparison between the figures and the work of an artist for good reason. He is stressing the difference between these figure and real humans. The point is theological; man cannot reproduce creature with souls. This simply excludes an interpretation of the text that could have the author accused of blasphemy. It does not exclude the fantastic, science fiction or literal interpretation.

ihrer Kunst gegen diesem Geschöpff der Natur geschämbt haben. Nuhn fiengen sie an so groß zu werden, daß wir sie ab dem Küßelein heben, und auff einen langen Tisch, welcher mit weissem Samet bedecket worden, legen musten, so befahl uns auch der Alte, einen weissen zarten Doppeldaffet uber sie biß an die Brust zudecken, welches uns umb unaußsprechlicher schöne willen schier zu wider war, damit ichs aber kürtze, ehe wir daß Blut gar also verbraucht, waren sie schon in rechter erwachsener größe, hatten Goldgelbe krause Haar.

Und war das obgemeldte Venus Bild nichts gegen ihnen: Aber da war noch kein natürliche Wärmin oder Empfindligkeit, sonder Todte Bilder, doch Leblicher und

The old man who is master of the re-animation process must cover the figures in respect to their modesty. This is an interesting example of the multiple codes that are given to the reader. If the figures are more or less statues then there would seem to be no reason for

Natürlicher Farb: und weil zubesorgen sie wurden zu groß, wolte ihnen der Alte nichts mehr geben lassen, sonder decket ihnen mit dem Turch vollends das Gesicht und ließ den Tisch rings umbher mit Fackeln bestecken.

(Hie muß ich den Leser warnen, daß er diese Liechter nit für notwendig achte, dann es war deß Alten Intent allein dahin, daß wir nit mercken solten, wann die Seel in sie fuhre, wie wirs dann auch nit gemerckt hetten, wa ich die Flammen nit zuvor zweymalen gesehen hätte, doch ließ ich die andere Drey auff dem Glauben bleiben, so wuste der Alte auch nit, daß ich etwas mehrers gesehen.)

the modesty. If they are truly living figures then the doctrine that only God can create human beings is contradicted. The reader is left to judge whether it is a miracle or a technological wonder that is being presented.

Here is the crux of the description of the creation of the new bodies for the royal couple. Despite the fact that the alchemists have diligently assembled the components necessary for the beautiful (artistic) forms that lay before them on the bench, they cannot infuse these forms with life. This is not in contradiction to our thesis that the Chymische Hochzeit is an example of a text that was designed for multiple readings. It is merely a re-affirmation of the theological principles of the author. Later in the text the narrator describes the actual infusion of the souls into the bodies but little would be added by the presentation of the event here. We see that the reader must choose how he interprets the events presented. He is simply not allowed to see them as contrary to the doctrines of the Protestant faith.

I hope that the presentation of these substantial quotations from the three original Rosicrucian texts has given the reader of this study some idea of the flavor of these works. It is necessary to remember that their effect is not one that is easily discovered in individual passages, it is one that becomes apparent only through a synergetic effect. Nevertheless it is also true that a reading of any section of the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis, or the Chymische Hochzeit will provide an insight into the way in which the author(s) have constructed a maze of conflicting signs which enable the audience to arrive at more than one interpretation.